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Comment: Northeast National Petroleum Reserve

- 1 I attended the 1 July 2004 public hearing on the BLM's draft plan for oil and gas leasing in the Northeast Planning Areas of the Nation petroleum Reserve. Below are my comments:
- 2 -The 1998 plan for the 4.6 million acres northeast corner of the "Reserve" should not be amended to eliminate longstanding protections for the nationally and internationally significant biological and cultural values of the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area.
- 3 -Since the release of the 1998 Northeast plan, additional information and analyses have been accumulated that show the BLM should be more restrictive and protective of this plan.
- 004  
Studies -The National Academy of Sciences March 2003 Report, Cumulative Effects of Oil and Gas Activities on Alaska's North Slope documents environmental and cultural degradation that has occurred as a result of three decades of oil development.
- 005  
Basic -Degradation of this area for oil exploration will not provide this country energy independence. It will at best only be a short term fix with huge long term environmental impacts that will be irreversible.
- 6 -The leasing that is approved for this area as identified in the 1998 plan should proceed only after the key wildlife, wilderness and subsistence resources are identified and protected.
- 007  
Wildlife -This area has some of the most important natural resources in the entire circumpolar Arctic region:
- o Wetlands with high-density water bird nesting and molting habitat for threatened waterfowl
  - o Polar Bear denning habitat and grizzly bear feeding areas
  - o Primary calving ground for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.
  - o Subsistence resources for Alaskan natives
- 8 -This Administration has a responsibility both nationally and internationally to be a visionary and leader in environmental protections of our remaining natural areas/ wildlife habitats.
- 9 -We as stewards of the lands do not have the right to destroy or irrevocably degrade habitat that supports other species on this planet for short term reasons in this case that can be addressed in other ways such as more fuel efficient cars, energy conservation and investment in clean sustainable new sources of energy.

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Attached: None