

Attn: Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

Olympic Park Associates (OPA) appreciates this opportunity to make scoping comments on the proposed leasing of rights to drill for oil and gas in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. OPA's mission is to "to protect the wilderness and ecological integrity of Olympic National Park".

As a result, OPA is very concerned about the proposal to explore and drill in the Refuge because it will impact the ecological integrity of Olympic National Park. The Refuge is the hatching grounds for birds that migrate to six of the seven continents of the earth. One of those migrating flyways is the Pacific flyway which goes along the ocean strip of Olympic National Park. Other drilling activity in the Arctic has caused an increase of Arctic Foxes which dine on bird hatchlings. We are concerned that drilling activities would have the same effect on the bird population in the Refuge should exploration and drilling be allowed.

Birds are an intricate part of the earth's ecosystem. They eat many insects in their travels therefore helping to keep them in control. The reduction or loss of migrating birds would change the ecology of all the areas in which they live or fly through. The Arctic is the birthplace for many species of the world's migrating birds – song birds, ducks, geese, to name a few.

At some point, the oil that took millions of years to create, will become commercially unavailable. To also lose bird and wildlife species because we lacked the intelligence and foresight to save them in the attempt to suck every drop of oil available gives nothing to our children and grandchildren. Companies may make money, but the activity will leave fewer resources of value for them or others to buy.

The Arctic regions are already seeing the effects of climate change. There are coastal buildings falling into the ocean; polar bears are drowning because of the lack of summertime sea ice. Forest fires are moving into the Arctic regions because of the increasing dryness. Alaska's, along with Washington's and Oregon's, shellfish industry is beginning to see the effect of ocean acidification on its crab and shellfish. Their shells, especially in the young forming shells, are dissolving in the increasing acidity. This too affects the ecosystem of the Olympic National Park ocean strip.

OPA is concerned about the lack of resources to safely handle spills and other activities that come with drilling. Alaska is large with short seasons. The state will not provide the infrastructure to handle spills and fires on federal land. That means that the U.S. taxpayer must provide those resources.

The State of Alaska and the United States government must face financial reality. To sacrifice renewable resources to reduce current Alaskan state taxes is an injustice to Alaska's future and steals federal resources from the citizens of the rest of the United States. The small leasing fees will not compensate for the cost or damage that will be done by these activities in Alaska and the rest of the world.

OPA objects to the scoping process with meetings only being held in Alaska. OPA also objects that documents regarding this EIS are only available in Anchorage, Alaska. This is federal land owned by all Americans.

OPA asks that the scoping process for this proposal provide scientifically verifiable answers to the following:

1. How this activity will affect the migrating birds that nest in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?
2. How this activity will affect the other wildlife species that live in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?

3. How and who will be responsible for monitoring and regulating this project? What resources will be needed and what will be the cost of those costs? Will those costs be covered by the leasing permits?
4. We ask that scoping meetings be held in Seattle and Washington D.C. at a minimum.
5. We ask that documents relevant to this project and any resulting activities to be placed on the Internet so they are accessible to all.
6. How will this activity effect global warming?

Sincerely,

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