

Gwich'in Steering Committee · Alaska Wilderness League · Braided River · Center for Biological Diversity · Climate Hawks Vote · Conservation Alliance · Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship · Defenders of Wildlife · Earthjustice · Environment America · Environmental Protection Information Center · Eyak Preservation Council · Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition · Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges · Friends of the Earth US · Klamath Forest Alliance · League of Conservation Voters · National Audubon Society · National Wildlife Refuge Association · Native Movement · Natural Resources Defense Council · Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness · Northern Alaska Environmental Center · REDOIL · Sierra Club · Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance · Stand.earth · The Wilderness Society · Trustees for Alaska · Wilderness Watch

January 23, 2019

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the above-signed organizations, we are writing to urge you to become a cosponsor of Representative Jared Huffman's (D-CA) Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act. This important legislation would restore half a century of protection for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by repealing a provision – passed as part of the controversial tax act of 2017 – mandating an oil and gas program for the Refuge's fragile coastal plain. Arctic Refuge drilling remains deeply unpopular – more than two-thirds of Americans oppose it. This bill would restore essential protections and sides with the majority of the America public who do not want, have not asked for, and will not accept sacrificing the wildest place in America for short-sighted, destructive fossil fuel production.

Since the Arctic Refuge development mandate became law, the Trump administration has been pursuing an aggressive, expedited timeline to hold a lease sale. In December 2018, the Bureau of Land Management released its draft environmental impact statement in preparation for oil and gas lease sales on coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge, with the publicly stated goal of holding the first lease sale in summer 2019. This is just the latest move by the Trump administration in a rushed process that has seen expedited deadlines and arbitrary limitations placed on the environmental review every step of the way. Americans want a smart approach to sustainable energy development, not a careless sell-off of one of our wildest places.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of America's last wild places, and the coastal plain is its biological heart. It is home to the Porcupine caribou herd, musk oxen, wolves, imperiled polar bears, and nearly 200 species of migratory birds that migrate to six continents and all 50 states. Polar bears in particular are becoming more reliant on the coastal plain due to climate change and a continuing decline in Arctic sea ice. The proposed drilling also represents a threat to the way of life for the Gwich'in people of northeast Alaska and Canada that live along the boundaries of the Arctic Refuge and the migratory route of the Porcupine caribou. The Porcupine caribou herd, one of the largest in the world, is a key food source for the Gwich'in and calve their young in the same area where drilling is being proposed. Disturbances such as roads and vehicles from development would inevitably lead to the decline of the herd – a devastating threat to the Gwich'in people.

Protecting wild places such as the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge is a core American value. It is up to us to preserve important places like this for our children's children, and to respect the cultures of those people that have depended on these lands for generations. We look forward to working with you to restore protections for the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge and to defeat

any threats to this iconic place. Your co-sponsorship of the Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act will be an important first step.

If you have any questions or would like to become a cosponsor of the Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act, please contact Logan Ferree at Logan.Ferree@mail.house.gov.

Signed,

Gwich'in Steering Committee

Alaska Wilderness League

Braided River

Center for Biological Diversity

Climate Hawks Vote

Conservation Alliance

Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship

Defenders of Wildlife

Earthjustice

Environment America

Environmental Protection Information Center

Eyak Preservation Council

Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition

Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges

Friends of the Earth US

Klamath Forest Alliance

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