

November 2, 2017

Re: Testimony on Potential for Oil and Gas Exploration in the Arctic Refuge 1002 Area/ Coastal Plain

On behalf of our 100,000 members and supporters, Friends of Animals submits this testimony opposing oil and gas exploration in the Coastal Plain area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge known as area 1002.

Alaska is home to some of the last largely undisturbed areas of wilderness in the world, and the Arctic Refuge is a national treasure that deserves protection. Recent attempts to sneak language in the budget proposal that could open the area to drilling via Senate reconciliation instructions included in H. Con. Res 71 jeopardize this sensitive and irreplaceable ecosystem. Given the importance of the issue to Americans – two-thirds of Americans oppose drilling in the area¹ -- and the potential detrimental and irreversible consequences, such issues have no place in a budget proposal.

Friends of Animals has worked for more than a decade to protect the wildlife in the Refuge, which includes polar bears, wolves, Porcupine caribou and more than a hundred species of migratory birds, from previous back-door attempts to permit oil drilling that would have detrimental effects on their natural behaviors and habitat. Based in Connecticut, Friends of Animals worked closely with its Republican and Democratic Congressional representatives to include the 1.5 million-acre Coastal Plain, the very region currently under consideration in the budget for drilling, in the protected Refuge region. We must continue these efforts to protect this area.

While drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge may cause catastrophic consequences and irreversible damage, it comes with little to no benefits. The U.S. Geological Survey had estimated that the Coastal Plain area would only provide a six-month's supply of oil for Americans and would take years to get the supply to market.

Additionally, while drilling proponents claim the drilling in the 1002 region would raise more than \$1 billion in revenue for the U.S. Treasury over the next ten years, an analysis by the Center for American Progress found that oil and gas leases would raise less than \$40 million.²

¹ Recent polling by the Center on American Progress shows that two-thirds of Americans are opposed to drilling in the Refuge, with a majority "strongly opposed."

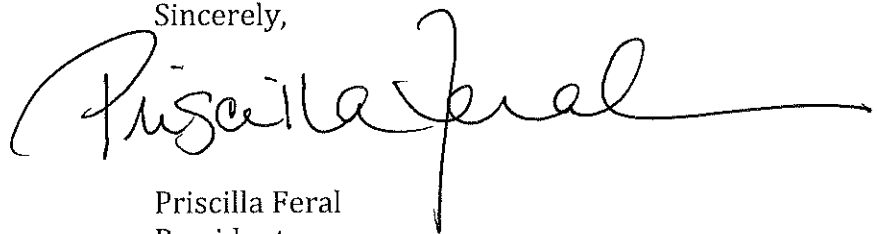
² The Center for American Progress analysis found that if all 1.5 million acres of the Coastal Plain were sold for oil drilling over the next ten years of a bid of \$50 per acre, the federal government, after providing Alaska with the required 50 percent share of federal energy royalties, would receive just \$37.5 million.

Even more concerning, surveys have noted that the oil in the Refuge is not concentrated in one large reservoir but spread out across the coast plain in dozens of small deposits. Thus, infrastructure such as roads and pipelines to produce the oil would have to stretch across the region. This development would destroy the ecosystem, disrupt the Porcupine caribou who use this Coastal Plain as a calving ground, and displace polar bears who build dens there.

Thus, Friends of Animals members stands with the vast majority of Americans, in its request to protect this irreplaceable landscape from seismic testing and drilling activities. Please do everything you can to enact the strongest possible protections for the Arctic landscape, its wildlife and all Americans.

Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Priscilla Feral". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Priscilla Feral
President
Friends of Animals