

Testimony re: [SJR 7](#) for Natural Resources Committee, Alaska State House of Representatives, Supporting Effort of The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to Execute the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program

By

Dave Harbour, Alaska Resident

March 6, 1019

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SJR 7. I hope to provide information that the committee doesn't yet have in the record enabling you to fully support BLM's efforts to timely conclude the EIS effort and fully execute a reasonable Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

The two areas I hope to cover are: 1) Important national support for the Administration's effort to follow through on the 1002 promise of ANILCA, and 2) Scientific study documenting the likelihood that Coastal Plain oil and gas exploration and development will not harm and may improve environmental values.

During the past decade I had the honor – as a member of the Regulatory Commission of Alaska – to serve as Chairman of the Western Association of Public Service Commissioners Gas Committee; as Vice Chairman of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners Gas Committee (NARUC) and as NARUC's Official Representative to the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission whose board consists of Alaska's sitting governor.

My focus during those days of busy RCA work was to attend NARUC and IOGCC meetings whenever I saw an opportunity to obtain national support for Alaska natural resource issues.

With AOGCC Commissioners John Norman, Kathy Foerster and Dan Seamount I helped write and achieve passage of several ANWR, Alaska gas pipeline and national energy policy resolutions. I also arranged for Governors Murkowski and Parnell and Senator Stevens to address various national forums, regarding our resources, that benefitted Alaska.

Several of these are included in the footnote.^{1 2 3 4}

I bring them to your attention to demonstrate that not only do we believe that 1002 area development is essential to Alaska, national energy leaders – both elected and appointed – have and continue to agree with us, even in this age of American energy independence.

Secondly, I presented to the BLM last month information related to scientific studies affirming the compatibility that reasonable oil and gas activity shares with Alaska North Slope (ANS) migratory species. That testimony is attached.

Therefore, on the basis of past Alaska legislative support, consistent support of all Alaskan governors, Alaska budget support, a sustainable Alaska economy, national appointed and elected official support, Congressional, maintenance of environmental values and Presidential support and a clear benefit to the national defense and public interest, I offer the support of one more voting Alaska citizen respectfully urging your approval of SJR 7.

Thank you.

Dave Harbour, 99504

¹ [NARUC support of Alaska Gas Transportation System](#)

² [NARUC-IOGCC study by SAIC documenting cost of NOT developing Federal Land energy resources](#)

³ [Numerous AOGCC initiated, IOGCC supported ANWR resolutions](#)

⁴ Other various national resolutions supporting pipeline approvals and OCS revenue sharing among these and other national organizations.

2-11-19 [BLM testimony](#) below

Testimony for: Ted A. Murphy, Acting Director, The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alaska State Office, Anchorage, Alaska Regarding Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS

By

Dave Harbour

February 11, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this brief comment.

1. In some of last year's scoping meetings you heard from a few witnesses that the current EIS process should be rigorous because much on Alaska's North Slope has changed over the years. While that statement is partly correct, the BLM, USFWS and DOI management should value and never discount some extremely important studies that could have great value in today's work.
 - a. By 1976, the Arctic Gas project had completed \$250 million of engineering and environmental studies which, in part, covered the 1.56 million area we know as the ANWR Coastal Plain. The 26 member Arctic Gas consortium had also constructed an engineering and environmental test facility at Prudhoe Bay, where ANWR related studies were completed. All of those vast studies are found within a 44 volume "Biological Report Series" which the consortium filed with the Federal Power Commission and the DOI and which was donated to UAF, the UAA-APU Consortium Library and the State library archives in Juneau.
 - b. The Biological Report Series along with vast engineering studies embraced the omnibus ecology of the coastal plain.
 - c. As part of that vast study the Arctic Gas Consortium studied the wintering habits of anadromous Arctic Char. Environmental researchers determined where in the rivers of the North Slope the Char overwintered in deep, cold but unfrozen freshwater pools. But

they also kept those exact locations **secret** lest enthusiastic local or visiting fisherman clean out a whole run of fish in a single expedition.

- d. The summertime, caribou noise studies are also relevant today, as well as the effect of mosquito populations on caribou calf survival and the benefits to caribou of gravel pads and roads rising out of the muskeg to provide breezy relief from “bugs”. Archeological values, revegetation and other useful values are a part of that ancient but still valuable environmental study from 1976.
2. Some of your previous witnesses lamented that BLM was taking the helm on this project from USFWS. But many of us local folk will remember that earlier USFWS hearings resulted in what we regarded as biased decisions to manage the Refuge like a wilderness. Those actions violated ANILCA’s Congressional intent. So I would urge managers to approach this Congressional Coastal Plain mandate in an objective way that is sensitive to the will of Congress both during passage of the Tax Bill last year and ANILCA in 1980. With passage of those two bills Congress intended to authorize oil and gas development, not the use of NEPA or other factors to discourage, stall or derail it.
3. As to the alternatives presented, I would defer to industry and agency professionals who will carefully review the concerns presented during these hearings with technical, legal and practical realities.
4. Having spent much time with many dear North Slope village friends, I found both wisdom and special interest represented in your scoping comment transcripts. After all, Arctic people are human like us and have their own valid agendas. I particularly valued some of the enlightened statements of Dennis Stacey and Charles Lampe, though all of the village comments give important perspective to regulators. As a former regulator myself, I appreciate the many apples and oranges values you’ll be evaluating: for some comments directly address the EIS process and DOI business while other comments deal with what subsidies from “some source” could make life more pleasant in that harsh environment. Separating the public interest from special interest is often the most demanding feature of regulation.

Dave Harbour, Alaska Resident, 99504