

Honorable Bob Abbey  
Director of Bureau of Land Management  
BLM Washington Office  
1849 C Street NW, Rm. 5665  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Director Abbey:

At 22 million acres, the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska (Reserve) is our nation's largest single unit of public land. The Reserve harbors rich, vital wild lands and rivers and wildlife such as the Teshekpuk caribou herd, millions of migratory birds, grizzly bears, threatened polar bears, walrus, wolves, beluga whales, and more. We feel strongly that there must be a balanced plan for the Reserve that protects special areas, while allowing for responsible oil and gas development in some areas.

The areas with the highest conservation value in the Reserve must be kept off-limits to oil and gas leasing and development. These include Teshekpuk Lake, Upper Colville River, Utukok River Uplands, Kasegaluk Lagoon, Dease Inlet, Meade River, Peard Bay, DeLong Mountains, and Arctic Foothills. These areas are of unparalleled subsistence, recreational, fish and wildlife, and historic value, and we would like ensure that they continue to be protected for future generations. For this reason, we strongly urge you to adopt at least the measures in Alternative B as a strong step toward the most responsible and balanced management plan for the Reserve – that will safeguard key habitat areas that are vital to healthy wildlife populations in America's Arctic.

The protections under Alternative B are essential to balanced management of the Reserve, and protection of the following special areas with incredible wild lands, wildlife and waters: Teshekpuk Lake and Dease Inlet to protect the core calving and post-calving grounds and insect relief habitat of the Teshekpuk caribou herd, and a globally-significant Important Bird Area with shorebirds, waterfowl and seabirds; Peard Bay and surrounding wetlands to protect a concentration area for multiple marine mammal species and concentrated nesting area for waterbirds; the expanded Utukok River Uplands Special Area which includes the DeLong Mountains and Upper Colville River area to protect the core calving grounds, insect relief and migration routes of the Western Arctic caribou herd and habitat for various predators including grizzly bear, wolves and wolverine; the Colville River to protect exceptional densities of cliff-nesting raptors; and Kasegaluk Lagoon to protect a unique coastal area vital to polar bear, walrus, ice seals, and beluga whales as well as an area designated as a globally-significant Important Bird Area.

Once again, we would like to express our gratitude toward the Bureau of Land Management for its effort to finding a balance between safeguarding ecological values in key landscapes and providing additional leasing opportunities in other parts in the Reserve.

Sincerely,

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