
[EXTERNAL] RFI: Special Areas in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska

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To BLM_NPRA_SpecialAreas <BLM_NPRA_SpecialAreas@blm.gov>

 2 attachments (5 MB)

Special Areas Proposal_The Wilderness Society et al_August 2024.pdf; Center for American Progress_RFI_Special Areas in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.pdf;

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To State Director Cohn:

The Center for American Progress is grateful that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is seeking feedback on the need to expand and protect Special Areas in the Western Arctic, a landscape which encompasses more than 23 million acres of vast, largely untouched, bountiful Alaska public lands. CAP asks that the BLM utilize this process to strengthen conservation of critical habitat and migration corridors, vital subsistence values, and other Arctic resources that are especially vulnerable to climate change. Such lands should be protected from short-sighted and reckless oil and gas development and pollution.

CAP supports the proposed Maximum Protection Measures (MPMs) and expanded Special Areas protections laid out in The Wilderness Society, et al "Special Areas Proposal: National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (Aug. 2024)," attached to this email. This proposal recommends six separate Special Area expansions in order to safeguard especially significant resource values from the threat of oil and gas development. The proposal calls for primary focus of protections on the area that would connect the Teshekpuk Lake and Colville River Special Areas, due to the area's importance for caribou, polar bear, and bird migration and habitat, as well as subsistence values for nearby Indigenous communities, and risk from oil and gas development. Further, the BLM should prohibit new gravel roads within the Special Areas and ensure vital protections are secured for the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd along with subsistence resources and activities. The BLM should prioritize Special Area designations and expansions in such areas where outstanding cultural and biological resources remain unprotected and in parts of the Reserve where risk of development is urgent.

The Center for American Progress has vocally supported the process for additional protections of America's Arctic and this RFI is a welcome step toward incorporating the latest science and mapping of

the area's resources. By seeking input on how to safeguard this area, the Biden-Harris administration is furthering its historic commitment to community-oriented conservation and stewardship of America's lands and waters.

For additional information on the recommendations we support for the management and protection of the National Petroleum Reserve, Alaska Special Areas, please see the following reports:

- [Biden's Opportunity To Protect the Western Arctic in the Wake of the Willow Project](#) (Nov. 2023)
- TWS et al., Special Areas Proposal: National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (Aug. 2024) (submitted to BLM_NPRA_SpecialAreas@blm.gov on August 27, 2024), available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JQXQ4UvjLNYjT3nS4RLyuDronopGgjHt/view?usp=sharing>.

Thank you,

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