

Alaska Oil and Gas Association



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TESTIMONY BEFORE U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
ON
ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN
May 11, 2010 – Anchorage, Alaska

My name is Marilyn Crockett and I am the Executive Director of the Alaska Oil and Gas Association (AOGA). AOGA is a private, nonprofit trade association whose members account for the majority of oil and gas exploration, production, transportation, refining and marketing activities in Alaska.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide brief comments to you today on the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's plans to revise the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). We will be submitting detailed written comments prior to the June 7, 2010 deadline for the scoping phase.

Let me begin by stating that it is appropriate to revise the 20+ year old conservation plan. As acknowledged in the Planning Update dated April, 2010, new information about refuge fish, wildlife and habitats is available which can and should be taken into account in the revised plan. What is not specifically discussed in the Update is the considerable experience the Service has had with managing refuges within the nation's system where oil and gas development has occurred concurrently with maintaining the refuges' values. Also not specifically acknowledged is the tremendous technological advancements which have taken place in techniques used in oil and gas exploration and development and the role these advancements play in reducing the environmental footprint of these operations.

I mention these because although the Service acknowledges that a decision to allow development in the 1002 Area of the Refuge (which represents only 8 percent of the Refuge's total size of 19 million acres) is exclusively left to Congress, many are concerned that the outcome of this planning revision could include a recommendation for the designation of Wilderness for this area. Such an outcome fails to take into account the experience and technological advancements I mentioned a moment ago and would have the practical effect of usurping Congressional intent.

The U. S. Energy Information Administration forecasts demand for oil and gas will increase by over 30% by 2025. The U. S. Geological Survey (USGS) estimates that between 5.7 and 16.0 billion barrels of technically recoverable crude oil and natural gas liquids are likely to be found in the ANWR coastal plain. Clearly, putting these substantial resources off-limits will threaten the nation's energy security by continuing to increase reliance on foreign imports to meet the nation's energy needs.

Alaskans have consistently recognized the importance of allowing oil and gas development in the coastal plain. As recently as this past January, polls indicate that 78% of Alaskans were supportive of opening the Coastal Plain. Clearly Alaskans recognize that oil and gas development and environmental protection of arctic resources are not mutually exclusive.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. We will continue to be engaged throughout the development of the revised Plan.