

**Notes from the Arctic Groups Meeting at the Alaska Wilderness League**

12/3/08

Outreach Group Participants:

December 3, 2008 America's Arctic Mtg Attendees				
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Agency Review Team Participants:

- Ned Farquhar, Interior
- Mark Van Putten, Interior
- John Echohawk, Interior
- Monica Medina, NOAA
- Dave Lazarus, DOA
- Meryl Harrell, EPA

Agenda:

- 1) Overview of the Arctic Region
- 2) Comprehensive Energy and Environment Plan for the Arctic
- 3) Ocean Policy
- 4) Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
- 5) Oil and Gas Leases & Litigation
- 6) NPR-A
- 7) Black Carbon

Take-Away Points:

- 1) There is a need for comprehensive science-based planning and international leadership around the issues of Arctic policy and Ocean policy. The new Administration has the opportunity to rationalize and make cohesive Arctic policy by creating an Interagency Task Force to create a comprehensive management plan for the Arctic Ocean Ecosystem.
- 2) There is an across-the-board need to suspend action on and reexamine oil and gas leases in the Arctic approved by the Bush Administration and assess the scientific basis for moving forward with those leases and lease proposals. There are a number of pending



litigation decisions and actions that will face the new Administration early on around this issue.

- 3) There is also a need for a holistic/balanced approach to domestic energy production in the Arctic Region (oil, gas and other) that weighs both the value of extracting energy resources and the costs to other resources and values. A more balanced approach could lead to possible decisions about the removal of sensitive lands from leasing, as well as to better processes for extracting resources in an environmentally responsible way.
- 4) There is an immediate need for EPA to address new sources of pollution in the Arctic as a result of increased commercialization in the region as the polar ice cap melts due to climate change. Black carbon (or soot), in particular, contributes to a feedback loop that leads to faster melting of the ice cap, and should be regulated.

Immediate Steps:

- 1) Call a time-out on processing all oil and gas leases in the Arctic Region and Bristol Bay (including telling MMS to suspend all action on its 5-year leasing plan);
- 2) Create an Interagency Task Force with a mandate to study Arctic ecosystems and then create a comprehensive Arctic Ocean Conservation and Energy Plan for the Arctic Ocean Ecosystem using a precautionary, science-based approach;
- 3) Seize available opportunities (including at an Arctic Convention in early April 2009) to take the lead in creating international consensus around Arctic governance;
- 4) Consider moving quickly to permanently remove key areas from resource extraction (for example: Bristol Bay, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and Teshepuck Lake in the NPR-A);
- 5) Move to regulate black carbon pollution in the context of EPA efforts to address climate change; and
- 6) Consider creating a new management regime for our oceans.