



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Washington, D.C. 20240
<http://www.blm.gov>



JAN 10 2019

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva:

Thank you for your letter dated January 7, 2019, to Acting Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt regarding public meetings for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program and the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan (NPR-A IAP). Acting Secretary Bernhardt asked me to respond on his behalf. We appreciate that you took the time to share your views.

Following consultation with the Department of the Interior's Office of the Solicitor, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alaska State Office determined sufficient carryover of prior year oil and gas appropriations were available to continue work related to the NPR-A IAP and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program as long as a limited number of staff were involved.

The Notice of Intent for the NPR-A IAP was published in the Federal Register on November 21, 2018, which initiated a 60-day public scoping comment period. The first set of scoping meetings were initially scheduled for December 5-8, 2018. However, due to the impacts of the 7.0 magnitude earthquake on November 30, 2018, in Anchorage, Alaska, the BLM postponed those meetings until January 4-10, 2019. Public meetings were held December 10, 2018, in Anchorage; December 11, 2018, in Atqasuk; December 12, 2018, in Anaktuvuk Pass; and December 13, 2018 in Fairbanks following the full restoration of BLM Alaska's operations.

The remainder of the NPR-A IAP public scoping meetings, which are funded by prior year carryover, occurred on January 4, 2019, in Utqiavik; January 5, 2019, in Nuiqsut; and January 9, 2019, in Wainwright. The final meeting will take place on January 10, 2019, in Point Lay. Details of these meetings were provided on the BLM's website and in local media.

Yesterday, the BLM announced its intent to postpone currently scheduled public meetings regarding the Draft EIS for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program. The BLM plans to hold public meetings in Anchorage, Arctic Village, Fairbanks, Kaktovik, Fort Yukon, Venetie, Utqiavik, and Washington, D.C. Times and locations will be announced at a future date in local media, newspapers, and on the BLM website. Public comments will continue to be accepted through February 11, 2019, per the Federal Register Notice released on December 28, 2018.

The planning process for both of these efforts are critical to the state of Alaska and the nation. The BLM will continue to ensure opportunities for public engagement are provided in order to allow local community members, governments, and the public at large to weigh in on these important matters.

If you have additional questions, please contact me at 202-208-3801.

Sincerely,



Brian C. Steed
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs