



June 11, 2018

Bureau of Land Management Alaska State Office
US Department of the Interior
222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

**RE: SUPPORT THE STUDY OF ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COASTAL PLAIN OIL AND GAS
LEASING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Dear Bureau of Land Management:

The Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce supports scoping efforts for Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) Environmental Impact Statement to include a thorough study of the economic impacts for Fairbanks and the State of Alaska. Please consider the points below that support the development of ANWR and the prospect of positive economic impacts for the Interior, Alaska, and America.

ANWR was specifically set aside for future oil and gas development in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980: Oil and gas from the non-Wilderness Coastal Plain is an important resource for meeting our nation's energy demands and achieving energy dominance. Alaska's economic lifeline, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS), is now running at three-quarters empty. New oil production from the coastal plain has the potential to reverse the decline throughput in TAPS. TAPS is a vital component of the American energy infrastructure, and a primary economic engine for the Interior. The Interior emphasizes its reliance on the oil industry, industry related contracts, and jobs.

International agencies forecast that over 50% of the globe's energy will still come from traditional sources of oil and gas in the next three decades: There are strong economic indicators that oil will be in demand over the long-term, and energy production from the coastal plain has the potential to offset a decline in Lower 48 shale oil production in coming years. Without ANWR development, America will be forced to increase its reliance on foreign imports. However, with development in ANWR, Fairbanks and Alaska can continue to grow its economy while reducing America's dependence on foreign oil.

Alaska has a strong track record of responsible development, and continues to make strides to reduce its environmental footprint: Thanks to continuing improvements in technology, practices, and oversight, the oil industry has demonstrated over the past 40 years that North Slope energy development and environmental stewardship can and do coexist. The industry has a proven track record of responsible development in sensitive areas, protecting the environment, and sustaining wildlife and the subsistence needs of local residents. Since the non-wilderness portion of the coastal plain is less than 60 miles from TAPS, development of energy resources in that area is one of the most

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environmentally-sound ways to increase oil production in Alaska, and also makes this an economic and viable prospect for oil.

Fairbanks has been an active partner with the oil and gas industry for decades through our support of North Slope oil fields activity and development. As such, the economic benefit to our community from industry activity is significant. Please consider both the direct and indirect economic impacts on the Interior in the EIS. Additionally, consider the positive benefits that employment has on reducing public spending on social programs such as public assistance for housing, energy, medical, etc. Further, potential reduction in crime, substance abuse, and other social ills that are generally correlated with employment should be considered. Jobs create positive economic and social benefits for individuals and communities and empirical evidence supports that claim.

The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce represents over 700 business members throughout Interior Alaska. We work to advocate for the best business environment, promote economic strength and growth for Interior Alaska, and to develop the resources and networks enterprising people use to share knowledge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marisa Sharrah".

Marisa Sharrah
President & CEO
Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tiffany Van Horn".

Tiffany Van Horn
Board Chair
Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce