Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 30, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader of the Senate
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Majority Leader McConnell,

We write to you regarding the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In particular, we have concerns with any proposal that would implement an oil and gas leasing program in the Refuge.

Since the Refuge was originally set aside for protection in 1960 by Republican President Dwight Eisenhower, Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike have stood together to protect this unparalleled landscape. For decades, Congress has voted to prohibit oil and gas development in the Refuge, with the overwhelming support of the American public. Support for this protection remains strong today. After years of debate, the Arctic Refuge stands as a symbol of our nation's strong and enduring natural legacy.

We have heard of reports that the Administration is considering efforts that allow seismic testing and other activities in the Refuge's Coastal Plain. Potential efforts like this by the Administration could threaten imperiled species and fragile habitat. The fate of the Arctic Refuge and its sensitive Coastal Plain lies in the hands of Congress and we must ensure robust debate on this highly-controversial issue.

Further, the resources beneath the Refuge's Coastal Plain simply are not necessary for our nation's energy independence. If proven, the estimated reserves in this region would represent a small percentage of the amount of oil produced worldwide. Moreover, the likelihood that lawsuits would accompany any development is high. Business-savvy oil companies are more likely to turn to the National Petroleum Reserve, a 23.5-million area in northwest Alaska specifically allocated for energy development, which is already closer to existing infrastructure and significantly less controversial.

One of the most pristine places left in America today, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is home to musk oxen, wolves, imperiled polar bears, and nearly 200 species of migratory birds that migrate to six continents and all 50 states. The Refuge's Coastal Plain is the calving ground for the majestic Porcupine caribou herd, which has sustained the Gwich'in people's way of life for thousands of years. Any development footprint in the Refuge stands to disrupt this fragile, critically important landscape.

On behalf of our constituents who deeply care about this issue, we appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to working with you to maintain the long-standing balance that protects and preserves the Refuge's incredible natural resources and wildlife habitat and allows for responsible American energy development elsewhere.

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Sincerely,

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Dave Reichert
Member of Congress

Ryan Costello
Member of Congress

Frank LoBiondo
Member of Congress

Chris Smith
Member of Congress

Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress

Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
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