



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Meetings Scheduled for Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program *Comment period also extended to March 13*

ANCHORAGE – Public Meetings are scheduled for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) made available for public review and comment on December 21, 2018.

The BLM will hold public meetings in various Alaskan communities and Washington, D.C. at the following times and locations:

February 4 – Fairbanks at the Carlson Center

February 5 – Kaktovik at the Harold Kaveolook School

February 6 – Utqiagvik at the Iñupiat Heritage Center

February 7 – Fort Yukon at the Fort Yukon Community Center

February 9 – Arctic Village at the Community Hall

February 10 – Venetie at the Village of Venetie Tribal Hall

February 11 – Anchorage at the Dena'ina Convention Center

February 13 – Washington D. C. at the National Housing Center

Meeting times and locations will be updated on the [BLM's ePlanning Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS Meeting webpage](#) as situations warrant.

“We received requests from Alaska communities and tribes as well as non-profit organizations from across the nation asking for additional time and meeting locations,” said **Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash**. “After considering these requests, we have decided to extend the comment period to March 13. This meeting schedule and format design will give the public an opportunity to engage our scientists and experts directly on key parts of the Draft EIS.”

All public meetings will be open house style with a presentation and subject matter experts on hand to answer questions. Extended open houses in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Washington D.C. will accommodate larger audiences and varying schedules. In the

remaining remote communities, a town hall-style meeting will follow for oral testimony to be taken.

“I am looking forward to interacting with the many stakeholders involved in this process,” **said Acting State Director Ted Murphy**. “It is this public input that is vital to ensuring we follow through with our legislated commitments in the most responsible manner possible.”

The publication of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on December 28, 2018, officially began the public comment period. The release of the Draft EIS is the next step in implementing the provisions in the Tax Act to establish and administer a competitive oil and gas program for the leasing, development, production, and transportation of oil and gas in and from the Coastal Plain area within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Congress specifically identified the Coastal Plain for its potential for oil and natural gas resources in Section 1002 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA). Oil and gas from the Coastal Plain is an important resource for meeting our nation’s energy demands and creating employment opportunities for Alaska’s North Slope residents.

The first lease sale will be held after the Final EIS and Record of Decision are issued and will offer not fewer than 400,000 acres area-wide of high-potential lands for bid.

The BLM is seeking feedback on the Draft EIS’s alternatives to inform the Final EIS and the Record of Decision. Substantive comments should include specific details regarding issues or concerns that also provide rationale for the concern or suggestion.

Comments on the Draft EIS will be accepted through March 13 and can be sent by any of the following methods:

- **Website:** <https://www.blm.gov/alaska/Coastal-Plain-EIS>
- **Mail:**
Attn: Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS
222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513
- **In Person:**
BLM Alaska State Office, BLM Alaska Public Information Center, 222 West 7th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99513.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may also be examined at the BLM Alaska Public Information Center.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Diverse activities authorized on these lands generated \$96 billion in sales of goods and services throughout the American economy in fiscal year 2017. These activities supported more than 468,000 jobs.