

Alaska Trucking Association, Inc.

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The authoritative voice of the trucking industry in Alaska

May 11, 2010

US Fish and Wildlife Service
Arctic National Wildlife Reserve
Public Testimony
May 11, 2010
Anchorage, Alaska

Presented by:
Aves Thompson, Executive Director
Alaska Trucking Association
Anchorage, Alaska

The Alaska Trucking Association, Inc. (ATA), with offices at 3443 Minnesota Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, is pleased to comment on the *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan* (CCP). ATA is an Alaskan trade association comprised of nearly 200 member companies representing the diverse trucking operations in Alaska from Barrow to Ketchikan. In Alaska: trucking employs over 31,000 people - 1 out of 9 civilian workers; trucking pays more than \$1 billion in wages annually and consists of nearly a thousand family-owned and corporate trucking businesses (most have fewer than 10 employees).

We understand that as part of the update to ANWR's CCP, the Service will conduct a review of the refuge lands to determine if additional acreage should be designated as federal Wilderness. The Record of Decision from this planning process could recommend the designation of the 1.5 million-acre coastal plain as Wilderness, an action that would permanently close America's most promising onshore oil and gas prospect to future development. While we realize that any proposed Wilderness designations will need to go before Congress for approval, ATA member companies want to be on record in support of keeping this area open to future potential oil and gas exploration and development.

The ATA supports oil and gas exploration and development for the following reasons:

- Congress excluded the "1002 area" from ANWR's large Wilderness block in a compromise struck under ANILCA. The compromise doubled the size of the Arctic Refuge and designated 8 million acres Wilderness. Congress also mandated a study of the 1002 area's environment and petroleum resources. In 1987, the Department of the Interior concluded oil development would have minimal impact on wildlife and recommended Congress open the coastal plain to development.



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- Responsible oil and gas development of the 1002 area of ANWR would provide a safe and secure source of energy to the nation, create hundreds of thousands of jobs throughout the country, and refill the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, which is operating at one-third its original capacity.
 - With advances in technology, it is possible to develop the coastal plain's energy reserves while directly utilizing very little (potentially only 2,000 acres) of the 1.5 million acres in the 1002 area. Such development would allow access to energy Americans need without any significant disturbance to wildlife.
 - Alaskans strongly oppose a Wilderness designation on ANWR's coastal plain. In fact, 78 percent of Alaskans support oil exploration on the in the 1002 area. Every Alaskan Governor and every legislature and elected congressional representative and senator from Alaska have supported responsible development. The North Slope Borough, the regional government for the entire Alaskan Arctic, also supports responsible development, as well as a strong majority of residents in Kaktovik, a village within the coastal plain.
 - A federal Wilderness designation over the 1002 area would forever place off-limits North America's most promising onshore oil and gas prospect to development and destroy the agreements made when ANILCA became law.

We urge the US Fish and Wildlife Service to recommend that the Coastal Plain remain open for oil and gas exploration and development.

Respectfully,



Aves Thompson
Executive Director



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