

How to Testify at a Virtual Public Hearing:

What to Expect

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will begin the meeting by presenting their plans and proposed rule changes for the Western Arctic
- Raise your hand if you would like to make a public comment. BLM will then call on people to testify in the order of hands raised.
- Please limit your testimony to 2-3 minutes.

What to Say

- Start your testimony with
 - Name, Location, Title or Group Affiliation (if you're speaking on behalf of an entity)
- Indicate why you are opposed to the proposed rule change. More importantly, why is this important to you specifically!
- Request that BLM reject the proposed rule change.
- Short and simple is fine! You do not need to use all your allotted time.
- The testimony will be audio only.

Talking Points You Can Reference

- The oil industry asked for a faster path to development. The administration is moving to give it one.
- BLM is proposing to replace important project-specific reviews by creating a single approach to an entire region, leaving unanswered questions and unknown impacts to cherished lands, wildlife, and communities. This would cut out scientific review and the public from understanding and participating in decisions about new projects that pose a clear threat to the Western Arctic.
- This is about leaving out the public and rubber-stamping permits for corporations backing oil and gas development.
- Decisions this consequential should not be fast-tracked. A project may look similar on paper to one approved somewhere else, but its specific location and design, wildlife impacts, subsistence impacts and cumulative footprint will be vastly different.
- Oil development in the Western Arctic leads to sprawling impacts: roads, pipelines, drilling pads and other industrial infrastructure on sensitive public lands, The Reserve also supports wildlife and communities that depend on these lands and waters.

- The vibrant Western Arctic is American Public Land that includes tundra, wetlands, rivers, coastal habitat and areas used by caribou, migratory birds, polar bears and local communities.
- Places such as Teshekpuk Lake and other Special Areas deserve particular protection. BLM's proposed rule treats areas open to leasing as all the same, and ignores the unique realities of a cherished and important region.

Issue Area Background:

Under the proposal, major oil and gas projects and infrastructure could receive expedited approval on as fast as a 60-day decision timeline. What this means is that even major projects similar to ConocoPhillips' Willow oil development, which covers a huge area and will cause significant harm to wildlife and people, could be fast tracked.

Normally, major projects like Willow go through a permitting process where the agency is required to take a close look at the impacts of that specific project and ways to address those impacts, as well as to provide an opportunity for the public and impacted communities to weigh in. This proposal would turn that on its head by creating a one-size-fits-all approach that would cut out that project-specific review process. It assumes projects will be approved, even without knowing at this point what might be proposed. Neighboring communities, the public, and the agency itself can't know the true impacts of a project before it is even proposed. BLM describes this as reducing redundant review and providing greater regulatory certainty for industry, but it is really an effort to bypass public involvement and meaningful review for projects.