



Testimony of

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Before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On

**H.R. 1146 (Rep. Huffman) "Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain
Protection Act".**

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My name is Richard Glenn and I am a resident of Alaska. I am a tribal member of the Native Village of Barrow and the like Matthew and Fenton, a tribal member of the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope. I've lived, hunted and explored across our entire North Slope. I am a geologist by training and currently serve as a Vice President for Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), which is headquartered on Alaska's Arctic Slope.

ASRC is one of twelve land-owning Alaska Native regional corporations created by Congress in 1971. The three of us Iñupiat people presenting to you today are all shareholders of ASRC. ASRC owns approximately five million acres of land on the Arctic Slope, including the subsurface rights to 92,000 acres on the Coastal Plain of ANWR. ASRC and the Kaktovik Iñupiat Corporation, the Alaska Native village corporation for the people of Kaktovik, own the 92,000 acres.

This hearing is being held to review a piece of legislation that deems to protect the "Arctic Culture" of the Coastal Plain. While we, the people of the Arctic Slope, and the only residents that reside in the 1002 of ANWR and the entire Coastal Plain of the US Arctic, were not consulted on this legislation. We are here today to provide an insight to the "Arctic Culture" this resolution claims to protect.

Our region includes the villages of Point Hope, Point Lay, Wainwright, Atkasuk, Utqiagvik, Nuiqsut, Kaktovik, and Anaktuvuk Pass. Arctic Slope village residents have always depended on subsistence resources from the land, rivers and ocean.

Running water, reliable power, local education, improved health care – things that most people take for granted, can be furnished in our region, but only if there is a tax base for our local government, the North Slope Borough.

Resource development, initially centered around Prudhoe Bay and now in progress for more than fifty years, is that tax base. It is the nature of oil fields that production declines with time and new fields are developed. The 1002 Area of ANWR, which includes our land – land that our people have lived on for thousands of years – is now the focus of exploration to offset decades of decline.



Wildlife surveys show that the Central Arctic Caribou herd, which calves in the vicinity of Prudhoe Bay and ongoing development today, migrates southward over the Brooks Range and into the Arctic Village area, where the Gwich'in people live. The caribou are hunted there by the Gwich'in people, and that is okay.

Caribou are in general indifferent to oil and gas infrastructure. I myself have successfully hunted caribou, in summer and winter months, in and around producing fields as well as in the open tundra. Canadian Gwich'in people hunt the Porcupine Caribou herd with the assistance of a gravel highway which goes through the migration route. The health of a caribou herd is most affected by its own naturally occurring swings in population, a process that is well documented.

While on the subject of wildlife, there is some discussion of risk to polar bears due to seismic exploration on Coastal Plain of the 1002 Area. The topography of the 1002 Area is kind of like that of the Great Plains – with flat lands, undulating slopes, and gentle foothills. Pregnant female polar bears den in snowdrifts that are adjacent to steep coastal bluffs or large pressure ridges on the sea ice. I have seen polar bear dens on coastal bluffs when traveling by snow machine. And I have crossed many seismic line trails by snow machine as well. There is zero chance that a surveyed seismic line will be located on top of denning polar bears. The seismic line will conform to the gentle rolling topography and only cross features like bluffs and rivers only where the topography allows. Much of the Coastal Plain is windswept so that you can see the tops of grasses, willows and other plants where there are no snowdrifts. If there is no snow, there is no seismic line, and if there is snow, the seismic line will be located on gentle topography where denning would be impossible.

The 1002 Area itself is no stranger to infrastructure. Beginning in 1947 and continuing to this very day, the US and Canadian military set up defense stations all across the Arctic. I have brought a figure with me that shows the distribution of these facilities and ask that it be accepted into the record. At its peak, there was a station every 50 miles or so that consisted of aircraft runways, tank farms, camp facilities, and radar and communications towers – covering thousands of acres. In these facilities were dozens to hundreds of men at a time.



These radar and communications facilities crossed the 1002 Area of ANWR. Over the years with the advent of satellite communications many intermediate communication stations were abandoned and de-mobilized. This itself was an intensive effort putting workers and equipment once again into the area that some deem as pristine. To this very day there is an operating Long Range Radar station located right in the village of Kaktovik. And you can see the footprints of the other stations in the 1002 Area in satellite imagery. With all those runways, radars, and towers, and people in transit, from the 1940's through today, the Gwich'in people and our people continued to hunt caribou.

Frequently, in the national discourse, our region is pitted against some of the Gwich'in people who live south of ANWR because we advocate for the development of our own lands. Congressman Huffman, you have introduced legislation that speaks about the human rights of the Gwich'in. What about the human rights of the Iñupiat? We, too, respect the rights of the Gwich'in. I believe we have more in common than most people understand. Our people behaved as indigenous neighbors throughout mankind. We traded, traveled and even made wars at one time or another where our boundaries met.

We have this in common as well, we fought side by side with the Gwich'in for the claims of aboriginal title to lands. Like the Gwich'in, we found some fault with the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Our region – the Arctic Slope region – was the only region to vote against it. Yet it passed Congress and we have since abided by its terms. Congress created these Alaska Native corporations, and conveyed to them the last vestige of lands that once covered almost all of Alaska-lands claimed by aboriginal title. In the Arctic Slope we received legal title to less than 10 percent of that which we claimed by aboriginal title. With lands ceded to them by Congress, the Gwich'in leased their lands for oil and gas exploration in the 1980's, seeking no input from us to the north. That's okay; they exercised their rights, and today we seek to exercise ours.

Your legislation fails even to recognize the existence of Kaktovikmiut – the only people who live within ANWR, never mind their rights as Americans. Your bill fails to recognize our region, our people, and to recognize the 1002 Area as our homeland.



We are not here to debate sacredness of land. All land is sacred. What we contest is that the people nearest to this issue, the people who live within ANWR, are not being given proportionate consideration, in fact any consideration, in this bill. When you occupy someone's house, you do not give more attention to the neighbors down the street than you do to the residents themselves. As Members, do you give more attention to the voters who live 150 miles south of your district than you do to your own constituents?

We have been yelled at in hearings, and belittled by Members of Congress for operating the Alaska Native corporations which you, the United States Congress, created. We are shamed for exploring, developing and producing resources in our own region. The same resources which allowed all of us to fly by jet and attend today's hearing. The same resources that jet you to and from your districts.

You have the heard voices of the Kaktovikmiut in front of you. Their voices are full of wisdom, sincerity and self-determination. I hope they aren't overlooked. We stand with them.

The fact is that quality of life has improved dramatically in our region, thanks in large part to resource development. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association Internal Medicine titled "Inequalities in Life Expectancy Among US Counties 1980-2014 Temporal Trends and Key Drivers" examined the life expectancy in all US counties. The average life expectancy of people living in the North Slope Borough over this 34 year interval increased by 8-13 years. No other area in the United States experienced a higher increase in life expectancy. The factors explaining this increase: declining poverty, increasing high school graduation, and increasing employment opportunities, and improved access to health care. The very things that have been fostered in our region due to oil and gas development.

On the Arctic Slope, the facts of our life are that development and wildlife populations coexist; and development and our people also coexist. The survival of our region and the development of our communities today depend on continued development. Industry has explored in our region and we have been there at their side every step of the way. This our freedom. This is what allows us to hunt and then have a warm house to come home to.



I encourage you to work with and listen to the village of Kaktovik and the North Slope Borough. ANWR, especially the 1002 Area, is the ancestral and continuing homeland of the Iñupiat people. In trying to listen to the will of the American people regarding ANWR, extra attention should be given to Alaskans, especially those in Kaktovik and the North Slope Borough.

ASRC understands that there is a public lands/public comment aspect to all of the ANWR, and that the American people have a role to play in its management. We understand it is easy to be angry about the impacts of climate change. We are on the front lines and live it every day. But it's harder to reconcile the fact that you are still consuming oil, and we are your fellow Americans who can provide that oil and a responsible way that benefits our people until you stop consuming. When the day comes and we have to change our economies, we will hold hands with the rest of the world and do so.

Until then, closing Arctic development will damage the viability of Arctic communities without altering the global climate at all. Our "Arctic Culture" needs no protection, rather the continued freedom of economic self determination to provide for our people – is what needs protection.



