

*The following statement was delivered by Sustainable Newton President Maurice Carter in oral testimony before Federal Bureau of Land Management Alaska Field Office on September 14, 2021 in response to the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program.*

I am Maurice Carter, President of Sustainable Newton, a Georgia-based climate action non-profit.

The term “wildlife refuge” should be sufficient to explain why this drilling is a bad idea. When I imagine the places I seek refuge, oil wells don’t fit that picture. And nowhere on our fast-warming planet is as threatened as this Arctic coastal plain.

To justify exploiting Nature, we tell ourselves tradeoffs are necessary. But, in this case, there is nothing to be gained by encroaching on one of Nature’s last unspoiled frontiers.

Oil and gas were precious resources of the last century. Not this one. Ours is the age of decarbonization.

- Automakers are phasing out internal combustion engine cars and transitioning to all electric vehicles over the next 10 to 20 years.
- States are moving quickly to ban future sales of gasoline-powered cars.
- Electricity generated from solar and wind power is already cheaper than natural gas and continuing to drop.

All of this explains why no oil company has stepped up to lease and why banks are unwilling to lend money for such projects.

The decision to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for drilling was made hastily and – as we have seen -- against the overwhelming advice of scientists.

It is a move with dangerous environmental risks and no reasonable business rationale.

The decision needs to be reversed.

Thank you.