

Blankenship, Johni

From: Kenai Peninsula Borough <webmaster@borough.kenai.ak.us>
Sent: Thursday, November 15, 2018 4:02 PM
To: BoroughAssembly
Subject: New Public Comment to Assembly Members

Your Name: Marion K Nelson

Your Email: mmkn@ptialaska.net

Subject: Hilcorp land lease Old 2018-34

Message:

Please do not further compromise the residents of this beautiful area with oil field well pads, trash, pipes and all that goes with oil field development. You wouldn't like them moving right next door to you either. Sincerely,
Marion Nelson mmkn@ptialaska.net

Blankenship, Johni

From: McKibben Jackinsky <mckibben.jackinsky@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 19, 2018 9:15 PM
To: G_Notify_AssemblyClerk; Ogle, Wayne; Bagley, Dale; Hibbert, Brent; Smalley, Hal; Blakeley, Norm; Carpenter, Kenn; Fischer, Paul; Cooper, Kelly; Dunne, Willy
Subject: ORDINANCE 2018-34

To begin with, thank you for removing Ord. 2018-34 from the October 23 consent agenda. As evidenced by the turnout and discussion at the community meeting and by the 5-3 vote of the KPB Planning Commission, the leasing of land to Hilcorp for oil and gas exploration is no simple matter and certainly does not have unanimous support.

As someone who has worked in Alaska's oilfield, researched and written on the subject, interviewed numerous individuals, been offered multiple leases (including two from Hilcorp), owns property directly south of the Ninilchik Unit which encompasses eight oil and gas pads operated by Hilcorp within a 12-mile stretch, and is neighbor of 20+ privately-owned acres that were sold two years ago to Hilcorp, this is a subject with which I am familiar. It is from that perspective I ask you to consider my comments.

After interviewing property owners from Clam Gulch to Homer's East End Road, I know that oil and gas moving into a neighborhood has created impacts to residents so disruptive that some have sold property on which they thought they'd spend the rest of their lives. Some who considered selling were told their land wasn't worth as much as they put into it. One Clam Gulch family – husband, wife, six children – was so stressed by Hilcorp's work on a parcel on the opposite side of the Sterling Highway that included the (1) continual noise of voices, clanking pipes and back-up alarms, (2) traffic to and from the pad, (3) clear-cutting of trees that stripped them of their privacy and destroyed their view, (4) constant lights, (5) and the rude treatment of contractors and subcontractors that they put their house, barn and property up for sale (at a reduced price), boarded their animals (chickens, cows, horses) with family and friends, moved into a B&B and were looking for another location to settle.

In Stariski, I spoke with a homeowner who invested his Alaska Railroad retirement in a piece of bluff property and construction of an energy-efficient home, only to have BlueCrest set up shop on privately-owned property next door. After enduring vibrations that shook his house, noise that ruled out conversations inside his home, round the clock lights that shattered the natural light and darkness, and the roar of a natural gas flare dangerously dancing in inlet winds, the person I spoke with contacted a realtor and was told the dollar value of his property and residence had dropped by \$30,000 since BlueCrest's arrival.

In Anchor Point, a couple who searched long and hard for a piece of property where they could raise their son and enjoy an Alaska lifestyle that included the company of wildlife, being able to step out their back door and ski in the hush of the forest, and step out their front door to enjoy views of the aurora, were shocked when a natural gas pad took shape next to them, the disruptive development inserting itself into the midst of their lives. They, too, contacted a realtor, but decided against selling when they were advised they would very likely have to sell at a significant loss if they could sell at all because of the activity next door.

In each case, the property owners contacted decision-makers on the borough and state level they hoped would help them find solutions to the nightmare that had become their lives. In each case, they found no one willing to listen, much less help them resolve their circumstances.

After generations of Alaskans and Kenai Peninsula residents, including my great-great-great grandparents who were one of two founding families of Ninilchik, have enjoyed digging and eating razor clams. In 2010 an immense die-off of the bivalves eventually led to a harvesting closure from Kenai River to the Homer Spit. At the time the Alaska Department of Fish and Game blamed it on a storm. When I covered the die-off for the Homer News, I asked if seismic studies might have played a part, but was told that hadn't been considered. Since then, Alaska Pacific University biology professor Brad Harris (from Anchor Point) and his students have worked with ADF&G to study the die-off in detail and have determined numerous environmental causes that could be to blame, including water quality, coastal erosion, climate change and habitat degradation. A study by the University of St. Andrews in Scotland identified body abnormalities in marine invertebrates, including shellfish, exposed to noise. As a result, St. Andrews senior research fellow Dr. Mark Johnson issued this plea: "Between shipping, construction and oil explorations, we are making more and more noise in the oceans. ... It is important to find out what noise levels are safe for shellfish to help reduce our impact on these key links to the food chain."

In January 2016, western Kenai Peninsula residents were jolted with a 7.1 earthquake occurring in Cook Inlet. It caused an Enstar natural gas line to rupture and four homes to be destroyed by fire. This in spite of a prior warning resulting from a U.S. Geological Survey study based on seismic data obtained by the oil and gas industry. After mapping Cook Inlet's numerous faults, USGS scientist Peter Haeussler said, "I think the oil companies should assess whether pipelines can be compressed as the faults shift. The faults could produce earthquakes large enough to rupture pipelines." According to earthquaketrack.com, the state of Alaska has had 6,175 in the past 365 days, including the 7.9 earthquake near Kodiak earlier this year that forced Kenai Peninsula residents living in low-lying areas to scramble to higher elevations in the event of a tsunami.

Numerous studies have been done in other states that indicate increased health risks for those living near oil and gas production. In 2018, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health published "Public Health and Safety Risks of Oil and Gas Facilities in Los Angeles County," which said, "The potential for adverse health effects from exposure to chemicals found in oil and gas facilities, combined with the need for more research and monitoring warrants precautions in policymaking," and suggests "the need for immediate actions to protect health at oil and gas facilities located immediately adjacent to sensitive populations." A study by the Colorado School of Public Health found that the lifetime cancer risk of those living within 500 feet of a natural gas well was eight times more than the Environmental Protection Agency's upper risk threshold. In Alaska, oil and gas production has mostly been in remote locations, but residents of Nuiqsit, a North Slope community, tell of health challenges, as well as decreased air quality, melting permafrost destroying their food storage, and the deaf ears of those to whom they have raised their concerns. With oil and gas moving into southern Kenai Peninsula neighborhoods, it would be wise to take health impacts seriously.

It isn't just Kenai Peninsula residents impacted by the spread of oil and gas exploration. In the fall of 2017, family and friends joined my husband and me in a sign-carrying demonstration at the end of our driveway opposing Hilcorp well pad construction on property next to ours. A van carrying an Anchorage family – parents and children – pulled over and the parents asked what was going on. We explained that the owners of Heavenly Sights campground and fishing charters had sold more than 20 acres to Hilcorp for natural gas exploration. The mother and children cried and the father expressed anger that one of the family's favorite camping spots on the peninsula was no longer available.

And it isn't just this generation that will be impacted by the spread of oil and gas production. Scientists have identified the burning of fossil fuels as one of the causes of climate change. Alaska's climate is ratcheting up twice as fast as the other 49 states. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says Cook Inlet area temperatures are warming 4.8 degrees Fahrenheit per century. On the Kenai Peninsula, that has allowed cold-sensitive insects and invasive plants to survive. We've lost 4 million acres of spruce trees and 60 percent of available water in the Kenai lowlands. With the fishing industry the largest private sector employer in the state, University of Alaska Anchorage economist Steve Colt has urged Alaskans to prepare for the coming impacts of ocean acidification. As the temperatures increase, the impacts will, too. What world are we destroying and what world are we creating for our children? Our children's children?

The Kenai Peninsula's natural beauty is a strong draw for those of us that live here. We buy property and position our houses to take advantage of unequalled views. Our diets include salmon, halibut and moose meat. We hike, ski and snowmachine the backcountry. We have favorite picnic spots and campsites. We beachcomb and climb mountains. And we support ourselves by operating businesses and creating employment opportunities for others that highlight our relationship with the outdoors. Access to our surroundings, and protecting them from harm, is key to our peninsula lifestyle.

You are in a unique position of responsibility as the fossil fuel industry spreads out of Prudhoe Bay, off Cook Inlet, beyond Nikiski's industrial area and into neighborhoods. When you measure its value, consider more than dollars and cents. When you allow it to reach into the heart of small communities, weigh your decision against all the reasons those communities are special. Look beyond what your actions mean to an out-of-state company and an industry to which the state has become overly indebted. Remember your reasons for living here. Be mindful of the effects your decisions will have.

Thank you for the integrity you bring to your roles,
McKibben Jackinsky
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