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## Discussion following the Remarks of Councilor Newman and Chief Linklater

Discussion

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## DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE REMARKS OF COUNCILOR NEWMAN AND CHIEF LINKLATER

MR. GROETZINGER: Thank you, both. That's a very important message and hopefully, you know, the proceedings of this Institute are published and hopefully some of the newspapers that write about the conference will convey your message, which I think we all feel deep down.

Henry had asked me to act as a proponent for the oil exploration and drillers' position today. I won't do that. But I will raise the arguments that have been proposed by them, and ask you to respond.

One of the chief arguments has been that the caribou on the north slope in Prudhoe Bay have grown by nine times from 3,000 head to about 28,000 head during the 20 years of drilling and the proposition is it won't hurt the Caribou in ANWR on the costal plain either.

What are the differences between Prudhoe Bay, the increase there, and how the caribou might be affected in ANWR?

CHIEF LINKLATER: I guess there are two major factors with Western Arctic (Prudhoe Bay) herd; one is that they can move. They can move their calving grounds.

In the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, you have the Arctic Ocean, you have the costal plain, and you have the Brooks Range, and so you basically have a 40, I think it's 25 to 40 mile area in which they can move and 100 miles long.

During the time that they calve, wolves are giving birth to their clubs, grizzly bears are giving birth, all the predators are giving birth, I think the only one that can reach them are the golden eagles, and the golden eagles during that time, take the most calves of any predator. The second factor with the Prudhoe Bay situation is that they've essentially eliminated all the predators, so that's given the caribou herd a chance to grow because there's nobody to feed on them. In a wild cycle, herds need predators to weed out the sick and the weak, so the strongest bloodlines carry on. So in actual fact that the herd is actually growing, but it may be also weaker and weaker.

MR. GROETZINGER: Can you give the audience a brief description of the spring and summer and fall calving season and what part the Gwich'in play in your hunt for the caribou?

CHIEF LINKLATER: I will start with the calving season. The calving season is basically one week in June and they basically stay in the calving grounds for one month till the calves are strong enough to start moving, out-run predators and cross major tributaries.

Once they've reached that age, then they disperse throughout the Gwich'in Nation really. When you look at the Gwich'in Nation, you're

looking at the range of the Porcupine caribou herd, so they go into Alaska, into the Yukon and into the Northwest territories.

Almost immediately, they're pursued by wolves, by bears, by wolverine. They get into areas of communities and they're hunted, by traditional hunters. It's one of the most studied herds of caribou in the world. So they're constantly being pursued by biologists who chase them down with helicopters. And, in fact, our elders from time to time every couple of years come to us and tell us to talk to the territorial government and tell them to stop chasing the caribou. We've done that and the territorial government has stopped from time to time. Because it's just a constant stressful life that they have.

Then they move into the wintering grounds in the Yukon, that's the Ogilvie range, it's higher elevations. It's wind blown snow, it's easier to get to the vegetation, as opposed to the valley's, where there is not as much wind and you get higher snow depth. They spend the winter there, and about this time of year (spring), for some reason, all of a sudden they start moving north. And they all do that at the same time. They all arrive at the calving grounds and within days start giving birth. They arrive there and start to feed and almost immediately give birth, something maybe in the food or whatever, in the air that starts that cycle.

And, then, it starts all over again. It's a very fragile herd as well.

We have issues around captive wildlife in the Yukon. We're afraid if wildlife is brought in, domesticated, some sort of disease could spread. If it spreads into the wildlife, a huge herd like the Porcupine caribou herd would diminish quickly. And when you consider the predators and the other competition for food that we have, that could really be one way of destroying that herd. So, it's a constant struggle to protect the herd and for the herd to stay healthy.

**MR. GROETZINGER:** Based on, you know, what I've read, there is a short period of time, maybe a month and a half, where the herd really needs protection during calving. As a proponent of drilling in ANWR, why not just stop drilling during that time and drill the rest of the year?

**CHIEF LINKLATER:** Well, if you look at aerial photos of that area in the 1940's, I believe it was - a CAT (bulldozer) walked across, a machine, with tracks went across the Tundra and those tracks are still there today. The nutrients in that area are such that it enriches the calves' milk, for a herd that size to continue to be strong, birth rates have remained quite high and successful, calving rates have to remain high.

So we're afraid if the area, the vegetation in that area is destroyed, they would have to go to an area where there is vegetation, that vegetation would not be as rich in nutrients and, therefore, wouldn't allow the calves to be as strong as they need to be in order to escape predators. That would have a severe impact on the herd.

I've never know of any development on any Arctic ground to be able to do it without any impact. It will have impact.

MR. GROETZINGER: Let me take that a step further. Technology is such that the footprint that I need to drill is considerably less. We're talking about 2,000 out of what, a million nine acres, that we need to drill on and not even all of the costal plain.

MS. NEWMAN: I will take this one. For an oil company to do exploration and drilling in an area, you need airports, you need large machines, you need drilling rigs, and they have raised this argument so many times. We're only going to use 2,000 acres.

However, they are counting the - when there is a pipeline, the part that actually touches the ground, they're counting that as part of the 2,000 acres. They will have one of those there - there not counting any of the machines that touch the ground.

So the oil that they're looking for are in small pockets spread across the refuge. So they may have a rig here, a rig there, and a pipeline that connects them all. Even though they say 2,000 acres, it's going to spread across the whole refuge.

MR. GROETZINGER: One last question, then I will open it up for other questions. 1987, Canada and the U.S. entered into an agreement regarding the Porcupine caribou herd that basically established a commission which would consult with all interested parties and make recommendations, none of which were binding, how effective has that been?

CHIEF LINKLATER: In the management of the heard, it's been effective. The territorial government, for example, will not write legislation on the herd, unless it's recommended by the Board and the Board has had a lot of discussions and included all communities, all the user communities of that herd. So it's been effective in the sense of bringing people together and discussing the issue.

In terms of the actual protection of the calving grounds itself. The secretariat did arrange in the earlier years tours down to the United States to educate people on the issue. But, lately, they've kind of pulled back from that and decided to concentrate more on the actual management of the herd outside of the calving grounds, and we've taken up the fight to protect the calving grounds, and we feel that we work better that way.

MR. GROETZINGER: Any questions? Henry.

MR. KING: I had a question on the relationship between the caribou and your people. I was curious to get a line on the dependence of your group on the caribou, how it exists? For instance, how many caribou do you have to kill to make it possible to have the food supply? Are you totally dependent on the caribou? I say this as one who is concerned about protecting your group.

I just think it would be helpful if we had a few more details on, is it the sole means of food for your group, or are there other things that you're involved with?

My question is meant to be constructive as evidence of what you're proposing.

CHIEF LINKLATER: I think the average family of four people might take anywhere from in the fall time, take anywhere from nine to fifteen caribou to get them through the winter and into spring.

In the spring time -

MR. KING: So that would be 60 caribou?

CHIEF LINKLATER: Much more than that.

MR. KING: Family of four, all right. You're right, right.

CHIEF LINKLATER: In the springtime, they may take three or four, what we call dry cows, ones with cows, we don't hunt the bulls, the bulls - once they get through the rut, it's a very tough winter from them and the meat is not very healthy, I guess. So that will get them back to fall. That's not the only means of food.

There's Pacific Salmon that come up and spawn in the waters of the Porcupine River. There is moose, rabbits, those types of things. Some food is supplemented with beef or pork or whatever. And then there is other food that's flown in. But, more importantly, I think is when you look at the health of our people, the actual physical health of our people, I think there is one case of Type 2 Diabetes in our community, which is highly unusual for an aboriginal community.

I have aunties, several aunties in their late 80's and one is actually living up river in her cabin right now, and she will probably stay up there by herself and stay up there until the river breaks, and somebody will pick her up and bring her back to the community to do whatever she wants to do. Her freezer is filled to the brim with berries, fish, her sons and grandsons get for her.

It's an extremely important part of our life and the health of our community is dependent on those caribou. It does have a benefit and that way you can see, if you want to relay it back to economics, we're not a burden to the health system. None of our 30 or 40 elders in our community is a burden to the health system. They're very healthy people.

A CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT: If you have about 300 in your community, families of 4, about 1600 caribou would be taken.

I'm just interested in what is the herd level doing over time? Is the herd growing? In other words, if you're taking 1600 in your community and you have 7,500 in the whole array. You take so many thousands between all that. I just wondered is the herd growing, predators get so many and natives, how is the herd doing?

CHIEF LINKLATER: Maybe Sandra can help. It's actually diminishing. We don't know why it's diminishing, but we do know we can only affect

what we can affect. We actually have asked our people to stop hunting the caribou at certain times. We can't control the disease, we can't control weather, we can't control predators. But we can control our hunting. So we actually asked that hunting be put off so the caribou can have a break basically. And a lot of our people have really been good in that way by sacrificing the food source or else diminishing it by a large part by maybe taking two caribou instead of taking seven. The 300 people in our community represents every man, woman and child. So the numbers aren't as high as they would appear strictly on those numbers.

Maybe Sandra knows the numbers.

MS. NEWMAN: In 1988, it was 180,000 Caribou. In 2004, we're 120,000, to 129,000. There are a lot of natural factors that come into play here.

There is, you know, it could be natural decline in the herd. It could be a lot to do with global warming. It has to do with the type of caribou that other communities might be harvesting, whether they are pregnant when they're harvested. The amount of snow. The snow is a large factor, because when there is too much snow due to global warming, their track to refuge is twice as hard, and sometimes they don't make it there.

A couple years ago, they didn't make it there two years in a row; usually 20,000 calves will be used or killed during a normal cycle. The times that they didn't make it there, 40,000 calves were killed. They were born that year just outside our community.

We've seen pictures where they were left on one side of the river and the mother had to go across the other side of the river and they have to dig under the snow for their food source and the snow was too deep. A lot of them didn't make it that year. There are a lot of factors that come into play as to why the numbers in the herd are so low right now.

And then there is also another factor we're looking at is we don't know if the herd will survive once it reaches 100,000. We don't know if it will naturally bring its numbers back up or if it will just slowly diminish.

A CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT: I wasn't being negative. You would make the case like if certain things happened and predators were minimized or eliminated, it might, in fact, help the herd grow. I sense you lose more from natural conditions than you would lose from the take.

Just as a counter side of the discussion, even in your own mind, as that herd diminishes, maybe you need to go after the predators as a community. It's just another way to protect the herd regardless of the oil stuff, but I was interested in what was happening.

CHIEF LINKLATER: In the past, just two years ago, I guess, some of our community members wanted us to do a wolf kill program, because actually that's what used to happen. Our people viewed wolves as competition for their food, and hunted wolves.

We did a study and found that the wolves, people thought they were wasting meat; they seemed to be killing moose and caribou for no reason. They (our people) found moose on a trail, with just a tear in their stomach and blood all over the place.

And what our elders told us, these were two or three young wolves, they would go ahead of the pack, they'd bring down the moose. They always brought it down on the right side and that would leave the left side exposed and they'd rip open the left side and take the liver out, a day or two later the rest of pack would come along and feed on it, so they said if you find a moose, go back or two or three days later and it will be gone because the rest of pack has come along.

There is two types of wolves in the North Yukon, one is a resident pack and the other is a transient pack that follows the caribou herd.

So, the herd, I think, at this point is strong enough to sustain predators, including humans, but, as Sandra said, we have to watch that 100,000 number very carefully, because models have been done on the herd. If it gets below 100,000, there's no chance it will ever recover, because of the predators it will continue to diminish.

MR. SILVIA: Tom Silvia, I'm from the Indian Law Section of the Michigan State Bar. I'm glad you're both here.

I have two questions really. One is in the material; they were talking about the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation as a Native Regional Corporation interested in oil development. And my experience in the past has told me to always ask the question of who that really is? What natives are involved in it and whether they're fronting from some oil company?

The second question has to do with what I know about what's going on in the Soviet Union at the same latitude that you are, where a lot of railroad and pipeline construction that they built because of global warming is threatened now because the Tundra, what you call Muskgig is becoming soft, and I'm wondering if you have any experience with that?

Those are the two questions I have.

CHIEF LINKLATER: Neither corporation in Alaska, from what I'm told, are set up in a way in which, if they don't make a profit, they can easily be taken over by another corporation. And these corporations hold the lands of the people. So, in effect, a village could lose rights to all of its land to a foreign corporation. You'll have to double check that fact. That's what I'm told. I haven't actually seen it in writing.

If that is, in fact, the case, I have very little choice to go after resource development. There are several native groups in Alaska - I can't remember the one that has the actual community as part of the group - there is several corporations that form groups, lobby groups, etc.

One group represents Native villages. They've passed a resolution, unanimously passed a resolution calling for protection of the Arctic Refuge. That was about five years ago or more.

So when you asked who, in fact, the corporations are, it's kind of difficult to say. For the most part, I think they're run by aboriginal people. But do these aboriginal people actually live in communities?

MS. NEWMAN: I was just on tour with a couple from Kaktovik and they are for protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

It was interesting. I found that the President of the North Slope Regional Corporation has a home in Barrow that has 26 rooms, which is untypical for homes in our area.

We have homes of two or three bedrooms, and we have small homes. This person, the President gets paid \$500,000 a year, and that does not include benefits that he has from all companies from anywhere else.

He and his wife own a Hummer each up in Barrow, Alaska which is on the tip of the earth basically. And so, it's difficult to say who owns sort of the oil companies of the Native people.

These people have been in agreement with the United States since 1971. They've been basically learning the economical side of development from United States. And their children are brought up seeing the economical side. So, since '71, they've been pushed to make money, pushed to use their resources, and the children grow up learning that.

You would hardly ever hear a child in Old Crow talk about the fact that there may be oilrigs on our community sometime. We have two wind - we have a wind measuring station on our mountain behind our community that measures wind because we plan to put three turbines up there to produce energy for our community.

We also looked at projects like heating, take the waste of the current diesel generator and we're looking into solar stuff. We were planning to do solar last year and we ran out of time and we found if you don't use all your hot water from the solar power, it will almost boil in your tank there. So we have 24-hour daylight and we can't use solar to heat our hot water, so we have to figure out another way, because our tanks would be boiling over every house.

A CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT: You cover the panels, put something on them part of day, you cover the panels. They don't pick up the sun.

CHIEF LINKLATER: Just on the issue on the impact of global warming on the north. We have been witnessing that for sometime beyond our community. There's some, what some call the drunken forest. It's basically the Tundra underneath the forest floor is melting so the trees are falling all over the place. We have noticed a lot of that. In fact, I'm the Chair of the Gwich'in Council International, which is a Council of Gwich'in Communities. We have a permanent participant seat on the Arctic Council and that



deals with certain polar issues around global warming because of all the effects of pollution in the north.

In fact, I have an article here from the Washington Post that talks about poisons threatening arctic mothers and PCBs and DDTs found in food, in caribou that mothers eat and that is processed through the body, gets in the breast milk and has threatened the child's wellbeing.

So those are some of issues that we deal with in the North. In fact, how does America and every other government in the southern hemisphere, how do they manage their pollution, because we feel the effects of it. We need to be part of that decision-making process as well we feel.

MR. GROETZINGER: A very interesting talk.

MR. KING: I want to thank the Canadian Consulate in Detroit for bringing these distinguished visitors here.

MS. NEWMAN: I have one more request, if you don't mind. I have a message for the people that if you don't take care of the earth, your children are going to suffer in the future and that's the one thing that I cannot relay enough, is that your children are suffering now, I know that; and I ask people to cover their bodies in cellophane wrap and leave one arm out and leave it on there for three months and look at the part of your body that's covered and look the part of the arm that's out and see the differences and relate that to how the earth is covered how what it's happening to the earth and the resources in the earth. And the only people that will suffer are your children in the future.

I just wanted you guys to know that and thank you for giving me that time.

MR. KING: Thank you very much.

(Session concluded)