

Build Back Fossil Free

The Arctic's Critical Role

Global warming is rapidly melting the sea ice, raising sea levels everywhere to dangerous heights and making the oil underneath Arctic waters more easily accessible than ever. It's no surprise, then, that corporations like Shell, ExxonMobil, and BP are eager to drill for it. For the Indigenous people who have inhabited this area for thousands of years, the resulting sea-level rise, loss of food sources and winter ice, and pollution from drilling threaten their culture and their very lives.

At the same time, viable habitats are shrinking for polar bears, wolves, migratory birds, and many other species that depend for their existence on a stable arctic climate. Yet the very companies largely responsible for climate change demand access to more oil, further thrusting the climate emergency into a lethal downward spiral.

For several decades, this delicate environment was off-limits to fossil-fuel exploration. To emphasize the importance of preserving this ecosystem, in 2015 the Obama administration made it illegal to drill in the U.S. Arctic for two years. Here as well, Trump tragically reversed course by opening the entire coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration. In addition, the most aggressive development option available has been selected for an area of great ecological diversity, long closed to drilling. Seventy percent of Americans oppose these actions. We emphatically urge the Biden Administration to address this disaster immediately.

As the alarming realities of climate change accelerate, the last thing we need is to burn more fossil fuels. Our demand is clear: keep it in the ground!