 

**POSTCARD PARTY 164 MARCH 13, 2020**

Arctic Lands Lose More Tracts to Development

A late 2019 Bureau of Land Management Environmental Impact Statement noted that the Trump Administration has plans to open more tracts to oil development and further reduce protections to land and wildlife in the vulnerable Arctic. North Slope Exploration, yet another newly formed company, has leased one million acres with 83 oil leases from the Bureau of Land Management. The Sierra Club yesterday issued this statement: “Last week Wells Fargo released an update to its environmental policy that rules out funding for oil and gas projects in the Arctic region, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The release of this change to the bank’s policy comes in the wake of similar announcements by Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase as well as more than a dozen other global banks. The pressure is working, so let’s keep it up.”

Action: Write, text, or mail CEOs of Citigroup, Bank of America and Morgan Stanley to follow their competitors’ example of global climate action by refusing to fund further projects in the sensitive and important Arctic Refuge.

Citigroup: Mr. Michael Corbat, CEO 399 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10043 [michael.l.corbat@citi.com](mailto:michael.l.corbat@citi.com)

Bank of America: Brian Moynihan, CEO 100 N Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28255

Morgan Stanley, James Gorman, CEO 1585 Broadway Ave. New York, NY10036 212-761-4000

Attention! This is a Disastrous Global Certainty.

“Tropical Forests are rapidly losing their ability to absorb carbon. The fact that this isn’t on every front page is terrifying.” Greta Thunberg

The world climate crisis is the real big picture, greater in urgency than the always ongoing political points of dispute. The climate crisis isn’t political or a hoax. It is a disastrous global certainty that should unite us to bring change in our daily lives, in media attention, and in the forefront of our politician’s goals and actions. It should not be on the back burner. Headlines should chronicle the reasons for and effects of our environmental crisis daily. It is just that important.

Action: Contact our governmental reps., and the candidates seeking to replace them about their views and goals. Contact media outlets to encourage regular environmental coverage.

Hendersonville Times News 106 Henderson Crossing Plaza, Hendersonville, NC 28792

Asheville Citizen Times 14 O Henry Ave, Asheville, NC 28801

NY Times & other outlets for news

Pay Roll Tax Cuts

3/11/20 The money taken in payroll taxes go to three things: Social Security, Medicare and unemployment insurance. Every pay period, salaried workers pay 6.2% of their gross annual income up to $137,700 for Social Security. Their employer also pays a 6.2% tax. Overall, employers and employees pay a [12.4% combined Social Security tax.](https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc751?mod=article_inline)

Workers pay 1.45% for Medicare taxes and employers pay 1.45%. Combined, they pay 2.9% in Medicare taxes. Workers making $200,000 a year and above (or married couples making $250,000)[pay an additional 0.9% in Medicare taxes.](https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/questions-and-answers-for-the-additional-medicare-tax?mod=article_inline) Employers also pay 6% on the first $7,000 of a worker’s wages; they may also have to pay state unemployment taxes, depending on the state.

[Social Security is our nation's most prized social program](https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/09/06/trump-payroll-tax-cut-how-affects-social-security-your-retirement/2224436001/), responsible for divvying out benefits to more than 63 million people each month, 70% of whom are retired workers, and it keeps an estimated [22 million beneficiaries out of poverty](https://www.fool.com/retirement/2018/11/08/quantifying-social-securitys-impact-on-poverty.aspx). Without Social Security, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities projects that the elderly poverty rate would more than quadruple to over 40%!

*Payroll taxes produced $914 billion in tax revenue for Social Security in 2019. They generated $278 billion for Medicare, and $41 billion for unemployment insurance.*

An estimate from the [Urban-Brookings Tax Policy](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/trump-proposes-payroll-tax-cuts-to-boost-the-economy-during-the-coronavirus-epidemic-but-would-it-really-work-2020-03-11?mod=newsviewer_click) Center said 121 million workers would benefit from a 2% cut in payroll tax, providing an average annual sum of $1,043. But *wealthier families would see the biggest gains*[, the analysis said.](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/this-is-exactly-how-much-a-payroll-tax-cut-would-help-the-average-american-2019-08-21?mod=article_inline)

[Social Security](https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/09/06/trump-payroll-tax-cut-how-affects-social-security-your-retirement/2224436001/) is contending with a $13.9 trillion cash shortfall that's only growing by the year. In each of the past two years, the long-term shortfall has risen by $700 billion, demonstrating that the longer lawmakers wait to act, the more painful the fix will be on working Americans. But temporarily crippling [Social Security's workhorse revenue producer](https://www.fool.com/retirement/2019/05/02/heres-how-social-security-collected-more-than-1-tr.aspx), the payroll tax, simply to provide a boost to consumer spending would amount to short-term gains in exchange for long-term pain and *could be a back door to getting rid of or privatizing Social Security.*

[***‘While a payroll-tax cut***](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/trump-proposes-payroll-tax-cuts-to-boost-the-economy-during-the-coronavirus-epidemic-but-would-it-really-work-2020-03-11?mod=newsviewer_click) *for employees likely doesn’t make sense, a payroll-tax cut for employers could.’* Nicole Kaeding, vice president at the National Taxpayers Union Foundation

Please write to your MOC demanding they not support a payroll tax cut for employees to preserve our treasured Entitlements of Social Security, Medicare and Unemployment insurance.

Pushing back Tax Filing deadline

3/11/20 [The Treasury Department](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/us/politics/treasury-irs-delay-tax-day-coronavirus.html?te=1&nl=morning-briefing&emc=edit_NN_p_20200311&section=topNews&campaign_id=9&instance_id=16646&segment_id=22075&user_id=6f885fcaf320d8eec61e9229ffd51bd8&regi_id=99731312tion=topNews) is weighing [extending the April 15 deadline](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/treasury-eyes-delaying-april-15-tax-deadline-due-to-coronavirus), as taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service brace for economic disruption from the spread of the coronavirus.The I.R.S. could extend the tax payment deadline or waive penalties and interest for late payments.Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, said he believed the Trump administration could create an additional $200 billion in liquidity by providing certain taxpayers and small businesses extensions on their taxes. [Details on how the filing delay](https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-treasury-likely-to-push-back-april-15-tax-filing-deadline-sources-11583897351?mod=hp_lead_pos5) would work and how long the extension would last have not been ironed out.

Please contact Mnuchin, Lewis, Neal and Rettig- Although a delay in tax filings could add to the federal deficit, as the Treasury Department would likely need to borrow more since it would not be receiving payments from taxpayers by April 15, extending the deadline could help many workers.

Steve Mnuchin, Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Richard E Neal Chair of Committee on Ways and Means, Rayburn House Office Building, 45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Lewis Chairman Sub Committee on Oversight, 300 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Rettig, Commissioner IRS, 1111 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington DC 20220

BONUS TOPIC: Contact any and all local officials and invite them to attend a Friday Postcard Party. We promise an hour of civil discourse with engaged, concerned citizens.