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Senate ENR Committee Vote: Victory for the Arctic Refuge

Statement from Kristen Miller, Government Affairs Director:

“Today’s Senate Energy Natural Resources Committee vote on Senator Lisa Murkowski’s (R-AK) amendment to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge shows that there is still clear bipartisan support to keep the Arctic Refuge pristine and wild for generations to come.

For the past 20 years, Congress has spoken out time and time again for protection of the Arctic Refuge’s coastal plain – also known as the biological heart of the iconic Arctic Refuge and the ‘sacred place where life begins’ by the people of the Gwich’in nation. Today, 13 senators reinstated their commitment to that tradition of protection.

(Those 13 senators are: Sens. Bingaman (D-NM), Dorgan (D-ND), Wyden (D-OR), Johnson (D-SD), Cantwell (D-WA), Menendez (D-NJ), Lincoln (D-AR), Sanders (D-VT), Bayh (D-IN), Stabenow (D-MI), Udall (D-CO), Shabean (D-NH) and McCain (R-AZ).)

Sen. Murkowski’s effort today was yet another in a long line of attempts by the Alaska delegation to hand over the only legislatively protected portion of America’s Arctic to the oil and gas industry. With the majority of America’s Arctic’s lands and waters open for development, now is the time to designate the Arctic Refuge as wilderness and focus on the shift to a clean energy future.

We have already seen incredible gains through conservation. In the past five years alone, conservation has already reduced estimates of our demand for oil by 2030 by an astounding 42 billion barrels, according to the Energy Information Administration (EIA). That is 17 times more oil than what might be produced in the Arctic Refuge during that time.

By pursuing strong investments in smart, cleaner, cheaper forms of energy, we can have ‘all of the above’ – a sustainable energy future with our most sensitive public lands protected for our children and grandchildren.”

About Alaska Wilderness League:

Alaska Wilderness League is the only organization dedicated solely to the preservation of Alaska's wilderness in the nation's capital. Go to www.alaskawild.org to find out more.

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