

**ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE \* DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE \* LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION  
VOTERS \* NORTHERN ALASKA ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER \* THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY**

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## **Sen. Lieberman introduces bill to protect the Arctic Refuge from drilling**

WASHINGTON – Continuing in his longtime role as a champion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT) today [is introducing a bill](#) to designate the 1.5 million acre Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge as Wilderness – giving its wildlife, lands and waters increased protections against development. This bill comes as the nation celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Arctic Refuge – an event recently highlighted by President Barack Obama through a [presidential proclamation](#) – and as the new Republican majority in the House of Representatives appears poised to push for more drilling there. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) introduced a companion bill in the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this month.

The Arctic Refuge and especially its Coastal Plain – the Refuge’s “biological heart” – is home to some of America’s most iconic species, including polar bears, brown bears, wolves, wolverines, muskoxen, and more than 130 species of migratory birds. Additionally, this area provides important calving grounds for the Porcupine caribou herd, which use the unique coastal plain habitat to birth and rear their young. These caribou are vital to the culture of the Gwich’in people, who call the Coastal Plain “the sacred place where life begins.”

*Sen. Lieberman’s bill is cosponsored by Senators Bernard Sanders (D-VT), Jack Reed (D-RI), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Mark Udall (D-CO), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Herb Kohl (D-WI), Tom Udall (D-NM), Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Patty Murray (D-WA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Diane Feinstein (D-CA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), John Kerry (D-MA), Richard Durbin (D-IL), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).*

### **QUOTES:**

“For 50 years, the cycle of life in the Arctic Refuge has remained unhindered by human development, so life there has continued to thrive. As Americans, we have a moral and civic duty to ensure that this cycle is not broken,” said **Cindy Shogan, Executive Director of Alaska Wilderness League**. “Over time, attempts to tack Arctic drilling legislation on almost anything moving in Congress have become relentless. Time and time again, the continued protection of the Arctic Refuge has been ensured by the efforts of leaders like Sen. Lieberman – now is the time to stop these attacks by designating the Coastal Plain as Wilderness.”

“The Arctic Refuge is the crown jewel of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and one of the most iconic places in America. Keeping this special and unique ecosystem free of pipelines, roads, and oil derricks is not just a conservation goal, it is a testament to America – that we, as a nation, can protect an area that is so special and so extraordinary for future generations. We thank Sen. Lieberman for his leadership, and we will continue to not only fend off the attacks of the oil industry and their enablers in Congress, but fight to fully protect the Arctic Refuge forever,” said **William H. Meadows, President, The Wilderness Society**.

“Alaskans played an influential role to get the Arctic Refuge established 50-years ago by President Eisenhower’s administration and we will continue to speak for protecting its coastal plain at the heart of the Arctic Refuge wilderness—the wilderness bill is an important step in keeping the integrity of the refuge,” said **Pamela Miller, Arctic Program Director of Northern Alaska Environmental Center.**

“We applaud Senator Lieberman for his visionary leadership in seeking to permanently protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge’s Coastal Plain and urge support for this legislation to safeguard a treasured portion of America’s national heritage,” said **Alex Taurel, Legislative Representative for the League of Conservation Voters.**

“The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge’s Coastal Plain deserves the same recognition and protections afforded to other national treasures,” said **Tim Male, vice president of conservation policy for Defenders of Wildlife.** “Politicians of both parties have always seen the virtue of preserving wildlife and places across the country. The Arctic Refuge is too unique and precious a place to allow oil drilling. As the late David Brower often said, ‘we are not yet so desperate that we must burn our cathedrals for firewood.’”

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