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Senate opens the door to plundering the Arctic Refuge

WASHINGTON – Today the Senate took a historic vote to strike the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Reconciliation instructions from the FY18 Senate Budget Resolution. [The amendment has the stated purpose of striking SENR instructions](#): “to prevent oil and gas development within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.” A group of congressional leaders including Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Edward Markey (D-MA) and Michael Bennet (R-CO) offered the amendment which failed 48 to 52 but garnered bipartisan support from Senator Susan Collins (R-ME). From here, the House and Senate will move into the complex process of budget reconciliation, which will require additional votes in the weeks ahead.

Statement by Adam Kolton, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:

“Today’s vote is a wakeup call for all Americans. Americans have fought for decades to protect this last remaining truly wild landscape, and are rallying today because they believe in taking action on climate change and want to defend the rights of the Native Gwich’in people. Every member of Congress who supported this scheme, to hijack the budget process to do the bidding of oil companies, needs to hear loud and clear that we are determined to defend ‘America’s Serengeti.’”

Since President Dwight Eisenhower originally protected the northeast corner of Alaska more than a half-century ago Republicans and Democrats have stood guard, defeating other attempts to squander our last great wilderness for a speculative short-term fix of oil. Senator Susan Collins today stood true to this bipartisan legacy and we urge others in the GOP will now follow their lead.

There is no greater legacy than leaving the planet better for the next generation and no greater political failure than robbing our children and grandchildren of their rightful inheritance. We must not let that happen.”

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The Arctic Refuge is one of our nation’s most majestic places, home to the Porcupine Caribou Herd, musk oxen, wolves, imperiled polar bears, and nearly 200 species of migratory birds that migrate to six continents and all 50 states.



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