

**Alaska Wilderness League \* Braided River \* Center for Biological Diversity \* Clean Water Action \* Defenders of Wildlife \* Earthjustice \* Environment America \* Eyak Preservation Council \* Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition and Native Movement \* Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges \* GreenLatinos \* Gwich'in Steering Committee \* Interfaith Power & Light \* League of Conservation Voters \* National Wildlife Refuge Association \* National Audubon Society \* Natural Resources Defense Council \* Pacific Environment \* Sierra Club \* The Wilderness Society \* Vets Voice Foundation**

**Senate advances Arctic Refuge drilling**  
*Congress ignores what Americans want: protections for the Arctic Refuge*

WASHINGTON – Today the Senate took a 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 (D-CO) offered the amendment. The amendment narrowly failed 48 to 52. From here, the House and Senate will move into the complex process of budget reconciliation.

Statement by Alaska Wilderness League, Braided River, Center for Biological Diversity, Clean Water Action, Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice, Environment America, Eyak Preservation Council, Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition and Native Movement, Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges, GreenLatinos, Gwich'in Steering Committee, Interfaith Power & Light, League of Conservation Voters, National Wildlife Refuge Association, National Audubon Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, Pacific Environment, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society and Vets Voice Foundation:

“Today’s vote was just the beginning of a long fight to ensure that this Congress does not authorize oil and gas development in the iconic Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. With the strong support of the American public, we will fight at every step to ensure that this shortsighted provision is not a part of any final budget reconciliation package. There is no reason why Congress should hijack the budget with a controversial rider to drill in the Arctic Refuge.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has always enjoyed bipartisan support and this vote by members of both parties secures that bipartisan legacy and underscores that both sides of the aisle are opposed to drilling in our most iconic and wildest places.

The Arctic Refuge has sustained the Gwich'in people for millennia. The Refuge’s Coastal Plain provides birthing grounds for the Porcupine Caribou Herd, which use the unique ecosystem to bear and rear their young. The Gwich'in people call the Coastal Plain ‘Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit’ or ‘The Sacred Place Where Life Begins.’ Protecting the caribou and the Gwich'in way of life is a matter of human rights. It is also vital to maintaining populations of other species including imperiled polar bears and more than 200 species of migratory birds that travel to and from all 50 states.”

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