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Congress doubles down on drilling the Arctic Refuge

WASHINGTON – Today the U.S. Senate Budget Committee packaged the Senate reconciliation instructions, which include a controversial provision to drill in the biological heart of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, with tax reform language. The bill passed out of committee 12-11.

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

“On Giving Tuesday, the Senate Budget Committee turned a day devoted to giving and charity into ‘Takeaway Tuesday.’ The bill takes away the only protected area of the American Arctic for the sake of increasing oil exports to China. It takes away a landscape vital for denning polar bears, calving caribou and millions of migratory birds for revenue that may never materialize. And it takes away an area vital to the subsistence culture of the Gwich’in people for the pipe dream of an oil bonanza.

Congress won’t get away with this subterfuge. No tax scheme is worth betraying our commitment to protect this iconic landscape for future generations, let alone one that piles massive debt on our children and grandchildren. Our nation’s largest and wildest refuge should not be sold off to the highest Big Oil bidders to pay for an infinitesimal fraction of tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires.

For nearly 30 years, the Arctic Refuge has been protected from drilling because of the support of the American people. Americans won’t stand idly by while the oil industry turns our conservation legacy into a series of roads, pipelines, well pads and gravel mines.”

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