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House Voting to Conference Controversial Bill This Afternoon

Washington, DC – The House of Representatives will vote to conference the controversial tax bill today, which includes a poison pill rider to drill in the biological heart of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

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

“Just days before the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge’s 57th birthday, the House is poised to conference on a controversial tax bill that also promises to destroy the Arctic Refuge.

We should be celebrating the life that the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge sustains. Instead, Congress is conferencing a controversial tax bill that will destroy sacred lands of the Gwich’in people, and vital habitat for caribou, denning polar bears, and millions of migratory birds.

But, it’s not over – drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most controversial parts of this package and Republican opposition has been growing. Conferees are hearing loud and clear that the final tax bill should not include Arctic Refuge drilling. Last week, a [group of courageous House Republican leaders](#) released a letter urging that the Arctic drilling scheme should be removed from the bill. In addition, [seven prominent Republicans](#), including two former Republican EPA administrators and Teddy Roosevelt IV, similarly called upon Congress to ensure that Arctic Refuge drilling be excluded from the final tax bill.

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 pay for an infinitesimal fraction of tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires.

For nearly half a century, the Arctic Refuge has been protected from drilling because the majority of Americans believe this iconic landscape is not worth sacrificing for a short-term speculative fix of oil that would be gone in a generation. We must draw a line in the tundra and save our last great wilderness.”

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