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**November 19, 2021**

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### **House passes Build Back Better Act that repeals Arctic Refuge oil program**

Washington — The U.S House of Representatives has passed (vote: 220-213) its version of the Build Back Better Act that includes repeal of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge oil and gas program and the buyback of all existing leases. The bill will now be sent back to the Senate. The program originally passed through reconciliation in 2017 as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. On January 6, 2021, the Trump administration held the first-ever lease sale for tracts on the 1.5-million-acre coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge. No major oil companies bid and the sale generated a mere \$12 million — less than 1% of the revenue promised by drilling proponents, and half of which was required to be paid back to Alaska.

Relevant language:

Subtitle L—Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

SEC. 71201. REPEAL OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE OIL AND GAS PROGRAM.

Section 20001 of Public Law 115–97 is repealed and any leases issued pursuant to section 20001 of Public Law 115–97 are hereby canceled and all payments related to the leases shall be returned to the lessee(s) within 30 days of enactment of this section.

#### **Statement by Kristen Miller, Acting Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:**

“The Build Back Better Act is a historic investment in America’s climate and clean energy future. Protecting our public lands and waters will help slow the loss of biodiversity and the impacts of climate change, and Alaska offers opportunities not available elsewhere in the U.S. to protect resources at the landscape level. Repealing the Arctic Refuge oil and gas program is the most important action Congress can take right now to protect threatened Arctic wildlife and ensure the rights, culture and sacred lands of Alaska Native peoples remain intact.

“Congress used budget reconciliation in 2017 to open the Arctic Refuge to oil and gas development backed by the ridiculous promise of billions in federal revenue from lease sales. Today, we support Congress taking long-overdue action to restore some fiscal common sense and restore protections for this crown jewel of our National Wildlife Refuge System.”

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*Alaska Wilderness League stands with, serves and supports the many people and organizations that believe in a sustainable future for Alaska. We honor and respect the cultures of Alaska Natives whose way of life remains deeply connected to the state’s land, waters and wildlife. We believe that Alaska’s long-term economic future and subsistence traditions are inexorably tied to the health and sound stewardship of its natural resources, which support hunting, fishing, tourism, and unrivaled outdoor experiences that are central to Alaskans’ quality of life.*



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