

**Alaska Wilderness League \* Alaska Coalition \* Audubon \* Defenders of Wildlife \*  
Earthjustice \* Friends of the Earth \* League of Conservation Voters \*  
National Wildlife Federation \* Sierra Club \* US Public Interest Research Group \*  
The Wilderness Society \***

For Immediate Release  
March 16, 2005

## **BATTLE FOR THE ARCTIC REFUGE IS JUST BEGINNING**

Today an amendment to keep oil drilling out of the Arctic Refuge was narrowly defeated in the US Senate by a vote of 51 to 49. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) offered an amendment, cosponsored by Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME), to reject a sneak attack on the Arctic by burying drilling language in the federal budget.

This battle is far from over. This is just the beginning. There is a long way to go before the drill rigs roll into the Arctic Refuge, and we'll be working with members of both parties in both Houses of Congress to keep Arctic drilling out of the final budget.

The American people are overwhelmingly opposed to drilling in the Arctic Refuge. We are confident that that the US Congress will ultimately listen to them and protect this national treasure. A recent Zogby International poll found that a majority of American people favored keeping the drilling out of the Refuge, 55 percent to 38 percent.

This Arctic drilling provision makes an already controversial budget even more contentious. The budget process is long and complex, and the outcome is far from certain. Congress hasn't even passed a budget resolution in the last two years. Rep. Jim Nussle (R-IA), chairman of the Budget Committee in the House, has expressed doubt that Congress can even pass a budget this year.

There are some places that should be off-limits to oil drilling and industrial development, and the Arctic Refuge is one of them. The harm to wildlife habitat for polar bear, caribou, and millions of migratory birds would be permanent and irreparable. We have a moral responsibility to save wild places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for future generations. That's why our country has remained committed to its protection for nearly 50 years.

The broad and diverse coalition of Americans working to protect the Arctic Refuge will fight every step of the way to keep Arctic drilling out of the budget. The battle for the Arctic Refuge has just begun.

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