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American Rivers * Center for Biological Diversity * Clean Water Action
Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice * Earthworks * Endangered Species Coalition
Environment America * Friends of the Earth * Green Science Policy Institute
GreenLatinos * Interfaith Power & Light * League of Conservation Voters
Los Padres ForestWatch * National Wildlife Refuge Association
Natural Resources Defense Council * Oceana * Power Shift Network
Restore America's Estuaries * Save EPA * Save EPA Ann Arbor
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance * Sierra Club * The Trust for Public Land
The Wilderness Society * Union of Concerned Scientists * Waterkeeper Alliance**

October 18, 2017

Dear Senator,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters across the country, we urge you to oppose the FY 2018 Senate Budget Resolution, S.Con.Res. 25 (H.Con.Res. 71). In its current form, this resolution assumes trillions of dollars in budget cuts, jeopardizing key programs and policies that protect our environment, communities and public health. This budget resolution also assumes the continuation of the irresponsible sequestration caps put in place by the Budget Control Act of 2011. Moreover, we remain very troubled by, and unwaveringly opposed to, the inclusion of non-budget related reconciliation instructions aimed at opening the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling.

The budget process should chart a responsible and intentional path for the fiscal year ahead. Instead, this proposal assumes additional spending cuts of over $5 trillion in the next ten years, in part by continuing, instead of responsibly addressing, the broad-sweeping and vastly damaging sequestration caps. It is unlikely that these cuts alone will meet the deficit neutrality requirements needed under reconciliation. As the non-partisan Tax Policy Center has estimated, this proposal will negatively impact the deficit by $2.4 trillion over ten years. Because of this, the pressure to cut from important environmental and public health priorities will likely increase.

Such cuts would only serve to further erode the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Energy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and numerous other departments and agencies to steward our natural resources, develop a sustainable clean energy future and protect our health.

A primary concern of our community are the reconciliation instructions to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. These instructions are directly aimed at including legislation in the reconciliation process to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. One of America's most iconic landscapes, this unparalleled refuge is home to musk oxen, wolves, imperiled polar bears, and nearly 200 species of migratory birds that migrate to six continents and all 50 states. The Refuge's Coastal Plain is the calving ground for the majestic Porcupine

Caribou Herd, which contains nearly 200,000 animals and is an essential subsistence and spiritual resource for the Gwich'in people. These reconciliation instructions should be removed.

Congressional Democrats and Republicans alike have worked to protect the Refuge from backdoor attempts to drill for over three decades, bolstered by the overwhelming support of the American public. The revenue assumptions used to justify these reconciliation instructions do not reflect economic reality, often divergent from comparable conditions by orders of magnitude. This controversial and inappropriate attempt to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling has no place in this budget resolution.

Once again, we urge you to oppose this budget resolution. We also urge you to oppose any efforts to make this resolution worse by the addition of any environmentally damaging policy riders or amendments. American families need a budget that builds on the successes of proven environmental programs and recognizes the value of these investments.

Sincerely,

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