

**Alaska Wilderness League • American Bird Conservancy • American Rivers • Center for Biological Diversity • Clean Water Action • Climate Hawks Vote • Committee on the Middle Fork Vermilion River • Defenders of Wildlife • Earthjustice • Earthworks • Environment America • Environmental Defense Action Fund • Gathering Waters • Headwaters Chapter Izaak Walton League • Hispanic Access Foundation • Junction Coalition • League of Conservation Voters • Milwaukee Riverkeeper • Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America • Natural Resources Defense Council • NextGen America • Oil Change International • Power Shift Network • Public Citizen • Restore America's Estuaries • Sierra Club • Southern Environmental Law Center • Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance • Superior Rivers Watershed Association • The Trust for Public Land • The Wilderness Society • Union of Concerned Scientists • Waterkeeper Alliance • WE ACT for Environmental Justice**

October 4, 2017

Dear Senator,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters across the country, we urge you to oppose the Senate Budget resolution during mark up in the Senate Budget Committee this week. As drafted, this resolution threatens the health of our nation's environment and communities. This proposal assumes trillions of dollars in spending cuts by continuing, instead of responsibly addressing, the blunt sequestration caps put in place by the Budget Control Act of 2011. We are also very troubled by, and steadfastly opposed to, the inclusion of non-budget related resolution instructions aimed at opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling.

This budget resolution does not represent regular order, nor a process the Senate should be pursuing in producing annual budget and appropriations legislation. By including instructions to only two committees, the Committee on Finance, and the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, this resolution clearly fails at guiding spending trajectories or ensuring fiscal responsibility. Instead this resolution serves as a grab-bag of ideological pursuits aimed at avoiding regular order via the budget reconciliation process.

This budget resolution uses assumptions and questionable gimmicks to pretend to achieve deficit neutrality. It proposes \$2.3 trillion in cuts unspecified by function. This proposal also assumes spending cuts of over \$5 trillion in the next ten years, in part by continuing, instead of responsibly addressing, the vastly damaging sequestration caps. The \$1.5 trillion tax package that this resolution advances will have deficit impacts that will undoubtedly squeeze funding appetites for the programs and agencies most critical to protecting our environment and the public's health. As the non-partisan Tax Policy Center has estimated, this proposal will negatively impact the deficit by \$2.4 trillion over ten years.

Such cuts will 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 other departments and agencies to steward our natural resources, develop a sustainable clean energy future and protect our health.

Of chief concern to our community are the instructions to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 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.

Democrats and Republicans in Congress alike have worked to protect the Refuge from backdoor attempts to drill for three decades backed by the overwhelming support of the American public. Adding such a high-profile, divisive provision to this bill has nothing to do with budget numbers and has everything to do with circumventing full and fair debate. Controversial policy issues do not belong in the budget reconciliation process, and as we have seen before, drilling in the sacred Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is especially divisive.

Once again, we urge you to oppose this budget resolution. American families need a budget that builds on the successes of proven environmental programs and recognizes the value of these investments.

Sincerely,

Alaska Wilderness League  
American Bird Conservancy  
American Rivers  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Clean Water Action  
Climate Hawks Vote  
Committee on the Middle Fork Vermilion River  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
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Environment America  
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Natural Resources Defense Council  
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Oil Change International  
Power Shift Network  
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