

ROLLING BACK PROTECTIONS IN THE NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE – ALASKA FOR THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Passed: 52-45

SUMMARY:

The Senate approved a Congressional Review Act resolution that would overturn protections for the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska, revoking a comprehensive approach to managing unique ecological values in favor of less restricted oil and gas development (*October 3, 2025, Roll Call No. 599*).

BACKGROUND:

The National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska (NPR-A or “Reserve”) is the largest single unit of public land in the United States. At 23 million acres, it is roughly the same size as the state of Indiana. The NPR-A’s vast landscape is home to extraordinary wildlife including caribou, polar bears, wolves, wolverines, walrus, and migratory birds from all 50 states and around the world. The Western Arctic and Teshekpuk Caribou herds each rely on distinct habitats in the NPR-A and are a vital subsistence resource for Indigenous communities in northern and western Alaska. Oil and gas development can fragment habitat and accelerate the melting of sea ice that many species in the NPR-A rely on for survival.

In 2013, the Obama Administration developed the first management plan for the NPR-A which restricted oil and gas development on approximately half of the Reserve. During his first term, the Trump Administration reversed those protections and made approximately 80% of the Reserve available for oil and gas development. The Biden Administration reversed the previous administration’s plan with the 2022 Integrated Activity Plan Record of Decision. This land use plan balanced input from more than 228,800 comments representing outdoor recreation, energy development, subsistence, and conservation interests.

On September 18, 2025, Senator Sullivan (R-Alaska) introduced S.J. Res. 80, a Congressional Review Act resolution to withdraw the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan Record of Decision. Revoking protections for the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska via Congressional Review Act puts industry interests over science-based management.

OUTCOME:

On October 3, 2025, the Senate passed S.J. Res. 80, 52-45. “No” was the pro-conservation vote.