SACRIFICING WILDLIFE AND HABITAT TO FUND BILLIONAIRE TAX BREAKS

Passed: 50-50

SUMMARY:

The Senate passed a budget reconciliation bill that would dramatically increase oil and gas drilling on our public lands and off our nation's coasts, increase logging on our public lands, and otherwise inflict severe damage on wildlife and habitat *(July 1, 2025, Roll Call No. 372).*

BACKGROUND:

Under the Congressional Budget Act, there is a special process called budget reconciliation that is used to advance certain budget-related legislation. Controversial Senate bills typically require at least 60 votes to pass; however, a reconciliation bill only requires 51 votes to pass. A party that holds the majority in the Senate can therefore use the reconciliation process to pass legislation that includes controversial provisions opposed by the minority. The House of Representatives requires only a simple majority to pass any bill. A reconciliation bill can only include provisions that change spending, modify the debt limit, or increase revenues outside of the regular annual appropriations process. Budgetary, not policy, goals are intended to be the primary focus of these bills. Budgetary changes, however, can and do have policy consequences and the policy is often the goal just as much as the budgetary impacts.

Congress and President Trump developed H.R. 1, the FY 2025 Budget Reconciliation Measure also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. This act reduces taxes, reduces or increases spending for various federal programs, increases the statutory debt limit, and otherwise addresses agencies and programs throughout the federal government. Among the provisions in the bill are ones that will inflict severe damage on wildlife and habitat. These harmful provisions mandate at least four lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge within 10 years and no fewer than five lease sales by not later than 10 years in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska; require lease sales of onshore oil and gas in any state with available land, including Wyoming, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Nevada and Alaska; increase logging by drastically raising timber targets and requiring the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to issue 45 contracts that will last for 20 years; significantly increase offshore oil and gas lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and Cook Inlet in Alaska; rescind any remaining Inflation Reduction Act funds for recovery of species listed under the Endangered Species Act; and allocate $46.5 billion for the construction of additional wasteful, ineffective, and destructive border wall and related infrastructure. The provisions harm critical climate change fighting investments by decimating incentives and funding for renewable energy and clean energy technologies made under the Inflation Reduction Act.

OUTCOME:

On July 1, 2025, the Senate passed H.R. 1, 50-50, with a tie-breaking vote by Vice President J.D. Vance. "No" was the pro-conservation vote.