



Audubon Armchair Activist

Audubon's Letter of the Month Club

May 2004

“POLLUTER PARADISE” ENERGY BILL ON THE MOVE

Congressional insiders are reporting that the U.S. Senate is poised to vote on S.2095 this month – a bill with far-reaching environmental implications that will harm birds, wildlife, and their habitat throughout the United States by subsidizing polluting industries and giving tax breaks and other incentives for oil and gas drilling in America's last pristine wild areas.

Proponents of S.2095 are using “fuzzy math” to make the bill appear less expensive, calling it “new” and using election-year buzzwords like “job creation” to make it more appealing. Truth be told, S.2095 as currently written, isn't new – it's just a shorter version of last year's “polluter paradise” energy bill. And we need to stop it now!

Much like last year's proposal, S.2095 weakens existing environmental safeguards such as the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. It promotes oil and gas drilling on precious public lands like the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska and expands development to areas currently off-limits due to their environmental fragility. It does nothing to reduce the threat of global warming, nor does it require an increase in the fuel efficiency of cars and trucks.

But wait – there's more! Latest news from Capitol Hill claims that should the Senate pass the bill, and it moves over to the U.S. House of Representatives for consideration, House leaders will look to add other provisions to the measure, including mea-

asures that would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling and give legal immunity to the producers of the poisonous gasoline additive MTBE, which has polluted groundwater in more than 1,000 communities across America. With this legal immunity, the producers of MTBE would not be responsible to help pay the medical bills of the families that have had their health compromised by the pollution – instead the costs would be passed on to taxpayers like you! You'll recall the House-passed energy bill from 2003 indeed includes proposals to drill in the Arctic Refuge and give legal immunity to the MTBE manufacturers!

Audubon and our partners in conservation are working hard to encourage the U.S. Senate to stop action on this “polluter paradise” bill, and instead take up an energy bill that focuses on the future, with provisions aimed at reducing our country's dependence on oil, increasing our use of clean, renewable energy sources, and protecting our public lands and precious wild areas without undermining environmental safeguards. Congress should pass energy legislation that moves America forward, not backward. But to succeed, we need your help — particularly since the Senate is expected to take up this measure this month! Please take a moment to contact your two U.S. Senators and urge them to oppose S.2095. Refer to the letter below, or call your Senators at (202) 224-3121! Hit the TAKE ACTION NOW key below to instantly identify and send a message to your two U.S. Senators on this issue today!

sample letter.

Your Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Date Here

The Honorable FIRST NAME LAST NAME OF SENATOR
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator LAST NAME HERE:

As a constituent concerned with conservation, I stand with the National Audubon Society in urging you to oppose S.2095, or any similar version of an energy bill that would set our country backwards by weakening existing environmental laws and protections for our public lands. We have a duty to protect our environment and America's wild lands for future generations, not squander them for the short-term profit of the big energy companies.

S.2095 does not call for an increase in the fuel efficiency of cars and trucks. It weakens existing environmental safeguards such as the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. It promotes oil and gas drilling on precious public lands like the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, and expands development to areas currently off-limits due to their environmental fragility. It does nothing to reduce the threat of global warming, nor does it require an increase in the fuel efficiency of cars and trucks.

I urge you to pass an energy bill that focuses on the future, that includes measures aimed at reducing our country's dependence on oil, increases our use of clean, renewable energy sources, protects our public lands, and modernizes the electricity grid to prevent future blackouts. Congress should pass an energy bill that allows our nation to meet its energy needs, without undermining environmental safeguards or destroying our precious wild areas. Energy legislation in 2004 should move America forward. S.2095 is not that legislation.

I urge you to oppose S.2095, and instead support legislation that will truly take America forward with a cleaner, safer, and more reliable energy policy.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Audubon
1150 Connecticut Ave, NW #600
Washington, D.C. 20036



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