



# Audubon Armchair Activist

Audubon's Letter of the Month Club

September 2003

## BLACKOUT BRINGS NEW ENERGY TO ARCTIC DRILLING ADVOCATES

Just when you thought the issue was over for the year, special interests have found a way to take another unrelated public problem and turn it into a call for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The blackout experienced in the United States and Canada in August has moved energy legislation onto the fast track in the U.S. Congress. You'll recall that earlier this year, the U.S. House passed an energy bill that included provisions to open the Arctic Refuge to drilling. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Auduboners across the country and our partners in conservation, the Senate passed an energy bill that did not authorize drilling in the pristine refuge.

Now, the final decision on Arctic drilling will be made by a Conference Committee comprised of members of the both the House and Senate. The leadership of the Conference Committee has expressed a strong intent to complete an energy bill quickly. And those powerful special interests that support opening the Arctic Refuge for drilling want to make sure that (a) Congress does indeed pass a bill and soon, and (b) that any final bill passed by the Conference Committee includes the House-passed provisions that allow drilling in the refuge. Congressional Insiders are reporting this week that if they are not successful with including the House-passed provisions, they'll seek a compromise. What that compromise will look like is unclear, but may be an agreement to explore possibilities of drilling by a specific date, perhaps 5 years down the line. Don't let your lawmakers be fooled by any of this last-minute trickery!

### SCENARIO MIRRORS 107th CONGRESSIONAL EFFORT

If you think this scenario sounds familiar, you're correct! Just last year, members of the 107th Congress selected for the energy Conference Committee could not reach a final agreement between the House-passed bill (that included drilling provisions) and the Senate-passed bill (that did not). Unable to reach an agreement or compromise, the measure ultimately failed. Could we be looking at this same scenario in 2003? It's possible, but this time the pro-drilling special interests are determined to change the final outcome and the blackout has created the political context for an energy bill to move forward quickly! And if they're looking for a potential compromise, they are indeed pulling out all the stops! Through their pro-drilling allies in the House and Senate, they're using the blackout as a means to get the energy bill through the Committee in September. If history proves an adequate guide, you can bet promises will be made to Committee members, claiming Arctic revenues will be directed to causes and organizations near and dear to those lawmakers!

Help ensure your lawmakers see through this ruse, and don't fall prey to enticements that may never see the light of day! Please send a letter to your lawmakers urging them to oppose any effort to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling, and ensure that any final energy bill does not include the House-passed drilling provisions! Refer to the sample letter enclosed, or visit our website to send your letter at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), and TAKE ACTION!

# sample letter:

Your Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Date

The Honorable NAME OF LAWMAKER HERE  
U.S. Senate (or U.S. House of Representatives)  
Washington, D.C. 20515 (or 20510 for House of Representatives)

Dear Senator Last Name Here: (Or Representative Last Name Here):

As a constituent concerned with conservation, I stand with the National Audubon Society in urging you to stand opposed to opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling, specifically by opposing any final energy bill that includes Arctic drilling provisions!

Please keep in mind that drilling in a natural treasure like the Arctic Refuge is no solution to America's pressing energy problems like the reliability of our electricity supply. We do not use oil to generate electricity. And remember that experts report there is only a 6-month supply of oil in the Refuge, and it would not be available for another ten years! That seems a far cry from a permanent solution to our immediate and pressing problems with electricity reliability.

It is very important to me that you stand for protecting the birds, wildlife, and wilderness values of one of the most pristine wild areas left in America. Millions of migratory birds representing 135 species migrate through and nest in the Arctic Refuge's pristine coastal plain, between the rugged Brooks Range Mountains and the ice-bound Beaufort Sea. Construction and operation of a major industrial complex for oil drilling in the refuge would degrade and destroy bird and wildlife habitat, and lead to numerous spills of crude oil that destroys the insulating capacity of feathers and fur. Keeping the drills and spills out of the refuge is the only way to ensure a disaster is not created for the birds and wildlife of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Again, I respectfully urge you to keep destructive oil drilling out of the pristine Arctic Refuge by opposing any language in the final energy bill that might allow such activity to proceed.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important environmental issue.

Sincerely,

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



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**ARCTIC DRILLING BACK**

