

**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 * Environment America *
Earthworks Environmental Defense Action Fund
Gathering Waters Headwaters chapter Izaak Walton League
Hispanic Access Foundation * Junction Coalition * League of Conservation Voters
Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America
Natural Resources Defense Council * Oil Change International * Power Shift
Network Public Citizen * Restore America's Estuaries * Sierra Club
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

Re: Oppose the House Budget Resolution

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters across the country, we urge you to oppose the House budget resolution, H.Con.Res 71, being considered on the floor this week. This irresponsible budget threatens the health of our nation's environment and communities. This proposal envisions drastic cuts and does nothing to address the blunt sequestration caps put in place by the Budget Control Act of 2011. Additionally, it contains a range of ideologically driven reconciliation instructions including drastically out-of-place instructions aimed at opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development.

We support a responsible budget process and the return to regular order to fund the federal government, this is not regular order. Unfortunately, this budget resolution fails to meet the fiscal needs our country has, and serves as a grab-bag of ideological pursuits aimed at avoiding regular order via the budget reconciliation process. We support a return to regular order, a return to the regular budget and appropriations cycles, and a responsible solution to the sequestration caps created by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

Instead of seeking a responsible solution to the Budget Control Act sequestration caps, this proposal lowers the already troubling non-defense discretionary spending caps by an additional \$5 billion in 2018, and even greater amounts in later years. Non-defense discretionary funding caps would shrink from \$511 billion in 2018 to \$424 billion in 2027. All this without seeking parity on defense cuts. In fact, this budget proposes defense spending levels above the President's request, while undercutting other national security needs. Parity and responsibility are vital foundations to solving the sequestration

caps issue, and this budget proposal does not employ either in its suggested path forward.

Not only does this budget assume \$5.4 trillion in spending cuts over ten years, this proposal relies on unspecified Non-Defense Discretionary cuts of nearly \$900 billion over the next ten years. These funding cuts will 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. This budget calls for and assumes trillions of dollars in cuts over the next ten years, employing fuzzy math and budget gimmicks to feign deficit neutrality. Time and again, fiscal hawks claim that spending on critical investments needs to be curtailed, but when push comes to shove, proposals like this show the reality that such cuts are politically and ideologically driven, not budgetary in nature.

Of particular concern to our community are the included reconciliation instructions to the House Natural Resources Committee, directly aimed at including legislation in the reconciliation process to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. The Arctic Refuge is among America's most iconic landscapes and one of our wildest pieces of public land. This unparalleled landscape 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.

In conclusion, this budget is not a responsible, thoughtful or procedurally sound product. Congress should return to regular order and focus on carrying out budget proposals that favor long-term responsibility and foresight instead of short-term ideological wins. The health of our environment means the health of our communities and the health of our economy. Economic growth will not come from polluted rivers, oceans and skies, tarnished landscapes or a sick workforce.

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
Earthworks
Environment America
Environmental Defense Action Fund
Gathering Waters
Headwaters chapter Izaak Walton League
Hispanic Access Foundation
Junction Coalition
League of Conservation Voters
Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America
Natural Resources Defense Council
Oil Change International
Power Shift Network
Public Citizen
Restore America's Estuaries
Sierra Club
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Superior Rivers Watershed Association
The Trust for Public Land
Union of Concerned Scientists
Waterkeeper Alliance
WE ACT for Environmental Justice