

Nancy Johnson



Fifth District, Connecticut

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Johnson Earns Sierra Club's Highest Honor

Sierra Club Calls Congresswoman an Environmental "Champion"

CANTON, CT – The Sierra Club, the nation's largest environmental organization, presented Congresswoman Nancy Johnson with its highest legislative honor today at a news conference on the banks of the Farmington River.

"Our environment is a precious resource that we have a responsibility to protect and preserve," Johnson said. "From protecting the Arctic Refuge in Alaska to improving the quality of our air, rivers, and forests in Connecticut, safeguarding our natural resources is a top priority of mine in Congress. I thank the Sierra Club and the many Connecticut residents who work to improve our environment here and throughout the nation."

On behalf of the national Sierra Club and its 750,000 members, Connecticut Chapter Chairman John Blake presented Johnson with the Dr. Edgar Wayburn Award, which recognizes "outstanding service to the environmental cause by a person in government." Dr. Wayburn is one of the country's great conservationists, and his work doubled the size of national park lands in America.

On the banks of the river she has passed legislation to protect, Johnson was recognized for her strong record of environmental protection and leadership, including her work to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil and gas exploration. Johnson has sponsored legislation and amendments in the U.S. House to protect the pristine Arctic Refuge, making it off-limits to drilling. The congresswoman pledged to continue her work to preserve the Refuge as one of the world's great wild spaces.

"Representative Nancy Johnson has always been a champion of legislation to protect the Arctic Refuge as a wilderness area," said Sierra Club national President Lisa Renstrom. "Showing great independence, Representative Johnson has led the effort in the House to block efforts to use the budget process to open up the Refuge to oil and gas exploration. Her leadership has been indispensable to the millions of Americans who place a priority on safeguarding our environment and protecting America's great wilderness areas."

Johnson has been a leader in safeguarding Connecticut's environment. Earlier this year Johnson's passed legislation in the House to add environmental protections to the upper

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Housatonic River valley by designating it a National Heritage Area. Johnson said she would continue pushing for Senate passage of the bill.

Johnson's 1994 legislation added protections to the western branch of the Farmington River by designating it a Wild and Scenic Partnership River, and now the congresswoman is pushing to add the same protections to the lower Farmington River. In addition, Johnson helped pass legislation commissioning a study of the Metacomet-Monadnock-Mattabesett trail in Connecticut and Massachusetts for addition to the National Trails System. Johnson noted that that study is nearing completion. And Johnson has worked with community leaders and stakeholders to preserve western Connecticut's Candlewood Lake, the state's largest.

“Representative Nancy Johnson is a true conservation champion and we are delighted to present her with this high honor,” said John Blake, chair of Sierra Club’s Connecticut Chapter. “She has worked hard to conserve Connecticut’s environment and has gone the extra mile time and again to protect America’s wilderness heritage for future generations.”

Previous Wayburn Award honorees include former congressman and presidential candidate Morris K. Udall, the namesake of legislation Johnson has sponsored to forever protect the Arctic Refuge as the “Morris K. Udall Wilderness Area.”

Other top honorees this year include Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on behalf of the Waterkeeper Alliance for its work to protect the nation’s waterways.

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