

# Nancy Johnson



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## **Johnson Praises Senate Vote to Protect Arctic Refuge**

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***Long Fight to Save Wilderness Area May be Over***  
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### **Johnson Tells Oil Companies To Abandon Drilling Plans**

WASHINGTON, DC – Congresswoman Nancy Johnson today praised the Senate’s vote to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling, signaling that the long fight to save this pristine wilderness area may be over.

Johnson and other House moderates blocked efforts to attach Arctic Refuge drilling authorizations to the recently passed deficit reduction bill. This was a key victory because the deficit reduction bill is governed by unique rules which prevent a Senate filibuster. Ending a filibuster and passing a bill in the Senate requires 60 votes. Without the possibility of a filibuster, the deficit reduction bill only needed 51 votes to pass, and drilling proponents saw this bill as their best opportunity to open the Refuge.

Seeing their last chance, proponents tried to bend congressional rules and insert the drilling authorization into the unrelated annual defense spending bill, which can be filibustered in the Senate. The House passed the bill last week over Johnson's objections. But the Senate today voted to sustain a filibuster of the defense bill and strip Arctic drilling provisions out of it. Now the bill can move forward to fund our Armed Forces without unnecessarily threatening this wilderness area and harming our environment.

The long fight to protect the Refuge may finally be over. If drilling advocates could not succeed using the filibuster-proof deficit reduction bill, and they could not approve Arctic drilling by bending Senate rules and attaching it to unrelated defense legislation, it is unlikely they ever could in the future, Johnson said.

**“Once again, we have protected this pristine wilderness from devastating oil exploration,” Johnson said. “We stood firm in the House and protected the Arctic Refuge when it was most endangered. And the Senate did its part by taking drilling out of the defense bill. With today’s decision, the oil companies should abandon their plans to drill in the Refuge because Congress has rejected it.”**

**“The Arctic Refuge is ‘America’s Serengeti,’ our last untouched wilderness. Drilling would threaten its fragile ecosystem, and we would lose one of our environmental treasures**

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**forever. Drilling is a bad deal for the environment, and it's a bad deal for consumers. Even the Energy Department admits that drilling for oil in the Refuge would save us only one penny per gallon of gas, and only in 20 years," Johnson said.**

**"Our tough stand in the House and the Senate's vote today means the Arctic Refuge will remain off-limits to oil drilling, and we are committed to making sure it stays that way," Johnson concluded.**

Johnson has long led the fight in Congress to protect the Arctic Refuge. The Sierra Club, the nation's largest environmental organization with 750,000 members, presented Johnson with its highest legislative honor earlier this year for her environmental leadership on behalf of Connecticut and the Arctic Refuge.

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