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Committee Passes Bipartisan Bill to Open 3% of ANWR for New American Energy Production, Job Creation

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House Natural Resources Committee today passed by a bipartisan vote of 29 to 13—26 Republicans and 3 Democrats—legislation to open less than 3% of ANWR to American energy production. This measure is one of the energy components of the *American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act*, a plan to link expanded energy production with infrastructure projects. This plan will create tens of thousands of jobs, generate billions of dollars in revenue, and expand responsible American energy production while protecting the environment. The North Slope of ANWR, which is not designated as Wilderness, was specifically set aside in 1980 by President Jimmy Carter and Congress for oil and gas development.

“At a time when the economy desperately needs growth and millions of Americans are out of work, opening less than three percent of ANWR for energy production—as it was originally intended—will create tens of thousands of jobs and billions of barrels of American oil. ANWR represents one of the single greatest opportunities for new energy production on federal land that will help insulate America against unstable foreign energy supplies and help boost the national economy as well as the local, Alaska Native economies,” **said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04).** *“For years, there has been bipartisan agreement to allow responsible energy production in ANWR and now thanks to new technologies we are able to access the full energy potential of ANWR by using less than three percent of its 19 million acres. Americans recognize the significant job creating and energy production potential of ANWR and are ready to utilize our own resources to help grow our economy and make America more energy secure.”*

“While I am proud to have passed ANWR out of committee today, the fact of the matter is that this is long overdue,” **said Rep. Don Young (AK-At large).** *“Alaskans overwhelmingly support opening ANWR because they know firsthand the type of high-paying jobs that will be created as well as the positive effect it will have on lowering energy prices. I applaud Chairman Hastings for his leadership on this issue and look forward to working with him to ensure this bill’s passage.”*

- Specifically, this component of the *American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act* will:
 - Open 400,000 acres of ANWR’s North Slope - less than 3% of ANWR’s total acreage - for responsible energy production.

- Direct the Interior Secretary to establish lease sales in the North Slope of at least 50,000 acres within 22 months of enactment and hold subsequent lease sales of at least 50,000 acres at 6, 12 and 18 month intervals. Require the lease schedule to be repeated two years later.
- Ensure there is a minimal environmental footprint by requiring that the land used for production and support facilities does not exceed 10,000 acres for each 100,000 acres of area leased.
- Protect the environment by directing the Secretary of the Interior to administer this Act in a way that ensures no significant adverse impacts to fish, wildlife, habitat, or the environment and that the best commercially available technology is used for energy production. It also gives the Secretary the authority to set aside environmentally “special areas” where development would be limited.
- Require an Environmental Impact Statement to be completed before conducting the first lease sale.
- Allow the Secretary to close portions of the Coastal Plain, on a seasonal basis, to drilling activities for protection of caribou, fish and other wildlife based on best available science.
- Set stringent reclamation and rehabilitation requirements for land impacted by oil and natural gas development.
- Ensure local residents have access to public lands for traditional uses and minimizes effects upon hunting, fishing and trapping.
- Establish that no oil produced under the leases shall be exported.
- Require the Secretary to encourage the use of U.S. workers and equipment in all construction related to energy development.

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