

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

H.J. RES. 131

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak on the 11:30 vote we are about to have. And I come because I want to speak against the effort to overturn the land management plan for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Congress established the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in 1980 to protect the diverse and unique, very fragile ecosystem located on 20 million acres in the northeast corner of Alaska. However, at the time, Congress failed to permanently protect 1.5 million acres of Coastal Plain, the biological beating heart of this incredible wilderness—a wilderness that is often called America's Serengeti; that is because of the hundreds of thousands of caribou that migrate and depend on these lands. Herds that Alaska Native Tribes rely on for subsistence and they have been an essential piece of their traditional culture and way of life.

Because it is one of the largest remaining untouched ecosystems on our entire planet, I believe we should strive hard to protect it. It is so unique. People do want to travel there. But many would like to ignore the fact that it is a fragile and irreplaceable beauty that lives along the Coastal Plain in order to search for oil and gas that may lie beneath.

The battle has been the subject of many intense congressional debates for decades. So far, we have been able to protect the Coastal Plain and keep it intact, as it has been for millions of years. And many Americans had hoped we had moved on. That is, moved on because even the oil companies have said, by virtue of not wanting to pay for any leases, that this area is not a good place to drill.

Some companies even paid to get out of their leases. I say moved on because, time and time again, insurers and major banks have pledged not to finance development in the refuge. The two failed lease sales under both the Trump and Biden administrations should have been the end to all of this, and that is because we were supposed to raise \$2 billion. In fact, when the language was passed, they said, well, we will raise \$2 billion, but they have actually only raised a few million.

So, in other words, this vote is about whether we want to spoil one of the last great pristine spots on planet Earth for what the market says is worth a few million dollars. I know, especially in Europe, there is a lot of tourism in the Arctic today. There are many people that want the last frontier experience and are paying for cruise ships that actually have ice-breaking capacity to travel to the Arctic Circle.

Why aren't we encouraging the same kind of tourism? And I think what makes even less sense about the future

is that, why would we vote to destroy something so fragile and so irreplaceable when we have a choice?

I want to point out that using the Congressional Review Act to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge could very well backfire on our drilling advocates. If Congress votes to overturn the Biden record of decision today, it would create legal and regulatory chaos, not clarity.

That is because it would revive the Trump era leasing plan that is legally flawed and under active litigation, effectively leaving no valid framework for how leasing could proceed. Just a way of saying, my guess is, it would have more lawsuits that would be easier to attack. That is because the CRA, if signed into law, the Department of the Interior couldn't reissue a similar rule, and the old leasing program did have serious legal deficiencies.

Contrast that with the existing record of decision, which followed science, law, and public input and balancing environmental protections and resource extraction in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

So I hope we won't make an irrevocable, irredeemable mistake in the Senate today by voting to overturn a science-based record of decision that was done by the book and with the public input. We should be hammering out a bipartisan agreement instead on other major issues like healthcare affordability or finding other ways to reduce the cost of living.

But this administration has opened up all drilling all over the United States for oil and gas production, and yet it isn't much higher than the record levels that were achieved during the Biden administration. That is even after the Big Beautiful Bill gave nearly \$6 billion in tax breaks this year for some of the biggest oil and gas companies.

So we gave huge, massive tax breaks that could have gone into paying for affordable healthcare, and instead, we gave them to oil companies. And yet we are not really producing much more than we have been producing under the last administration.

Even after we have seen the repeal of dozens of environmental regulations that protected America's health the oil companies had complained about. Even after the administration opened millions of acres in the sensitive lands, including the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, and millions of offshore acres, even when coastal residents are screaming they don't want these oil rigs off their coast.

So it isn't producing the effect that some of my colleagues hoped. So this is not a CRA we should vote for. We should oppose the CRA and keep the land management that is in place.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE SYSTEM

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I rise to call attention to a critical safety issue that affects every American who travels our roads and highways.

Across the country, we are seeing a disturbing rise in deadly accidents involving large commercial trucks driven by individuals who should have never been behind the wheel to begin with, often foreign nationals in the country illegally who exploited weaknesses in our commercial driver's license or CDL system.

We have seen the video of the horrific crash in Florida where an undocumented immigrant driving an 18-wheeler made an illegal U-turn on the interstate, killing three Americans who should be with us here today.

In mid-October, a semi-truck driver in California, in the United States illegally, with an immigration detainer notice, was accused of being intoxicated when he slammed into multiple vehicles, killing three people and injuring several more.

Sadly, incidents like this are becoming far too common, and we must ask why. The answer lies in failed policies.

Under previous Democratic administrations, safety enforcement was weakened, loopholes were opened, and fraudulent CDL issuance went unchecked. Under the Obama administration, inspectors were directed to issue citations rather than take unsafe commercial vehicle drivers completely off the road—a policy decision that has resulted in loss of life.

Meanwhile, open border policies of prior administrations would have allowed illegal immigrants to enter the United States freely which, combined with lax Federal oversight, has let some States issue CDLs without proper language or competency testing.

A Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration audit prompted by President Trump found that multiple States issued nondomiciled CDLs improperly to unqualified, often foreign drivers, even in some instances allowing them to keep licenses after their legal status expired.

In the Florida case, the FMCSA investigation revealed that the driver had failed the English language proficiency test, answering only 2 out of the 12 verbal questions correctly. Yet multiple States still allowed him to hold a valid CDL and operate a commercial vehicle on our roads.

The ongoing FMCSA audit revealed systemic violations by many States—including California, Washington, and New Mexico—that simply fail to follow Federal laws and regulations as they issue CDLs, which has resulted in greater threats to public safety.

After Secretary Duffy's criticism about California's lack of policy enforcement and threat to revoke Federal funding, California announced the revocation of 17,000 CDLs that were given to immigrants without valid visas. This means California has been allowing thousands of unqualified drivers to

operate throughout the country. I thank this administration and Secretary Duffy for taking action to hold States accountable for their mistakes.

While some States look the other way, my home State of Mississippi has tried to rein in this abuse in the trucking industry. Mississippi has taken decisive action and, in just the last 3 months alone, has identified 85 illegal drivers and referred them to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The State of Mississippi does not issue nondomiciled licenses and strictly enforces English language proficiency testing to keep our roads safe. My State is doing its part, but States cannot do this alone. The Federal Government must close these loopholes and enforce the law.

As chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, I successfully included language in the fiscal year 2026 bill and report that builds upon the President's Executive order to strengthen English proficiency requirements for commercial drivers.

I am also a proud cosponsor of Senator MARSHALL's Commercial Motor Vehicle English Proficiency Act to ensure all applicants for CDLs must pass the English proficiency test in English and not in any other language.

This commonsense measure would help guarantee that all truckdrivers can read traffic signs, communicate with law enforcement, and understand directions clearly and safely.

In addition, I cosponsored Senator MOODY's Safer Truckers Act, which restricts the issuance of CDLs to only U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and individuals who are authorized for employment by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration services.

These are commonsense reforms to restore integrity, accountability, and safety to our highways. At the same time, I commend the Trump administration for taking action on this front, particularly Secretary Noem and law enforcement officials who recently carried out Operation Midway Blitz.

This enforcement action led to the arrest of 223 illegal aliens, 146 of whom were truckdrivers. And just a few weeks ago, ICE announced the arrest of a man from Uzbekistan with a Pennsylvania CDL who was allowed in our country by the Biden administration even though he was wanted by the Government of Uzbekistan because of his links to a terrorist organization.

Needless to say, seeing ICE and State law enforcement come together to make America's roads safer is a step in the right direction. Republicans in the Senate and this administration remain committed to protecting American lives and keeping our roads safe. One key to do that is to ensure CDL holders are here legally and are proficient in the English language and can actually read road signs.

I yield the floor.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RELATING TO "COASTAL PLAIN OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM RECORD OF DECISION"

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 131, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 131) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Land Management relating to "Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the joint resolution for the third time.

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

VOTE ON H.J. RES. 131

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF), and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 632 Leg.]

YEAS—49

Banks	Grassley	Mullin
Barrasso	Hagerty	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hawley	Paul
Boozman	Hoeven	Ricketts
Britt	Husted	Risch
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Sheehy
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	McCormick	Young
Ernst	Moody	
Fischer	Moreno	

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Bennet	Blunt Rochester
Baldwin	Blumenthal	Booker

Cantwell	Kaine	Rosen
Collins	Kelly	Sanders
Coons	Kim	Schatz
Cortez Masto	King	Schumer
Duckworth	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Durbin	Lujan	Smith
Fetterman	Markley	Van Hollen
Gallego	Merkley	Warner
Gillibrand	Murray	Warnock
Hassan	Ossoff	Warren
Heinrich	Padilla	Welch
Hickenlooper	Peters	Whitehouse
Hirono	Reed	Wyden

NOT VOTING—6

Graham	Murphy	Shaheen
Moran	Schiff	Tuberville

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 131) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

MEASURE INDEFINITELY POSTPONED—S.J. Res. 91

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, S.J. Res. 91 is indefinitely postponed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator, please state your inquiry.

Mr. BENNET. The precedent of September 11, 2025, that established a majority threshold vote for cloture on an executive resolution that provided for the en bloc consideration of nominations excluded nominations at level 1 of the Executive Schedule under 5 U.S.C. 5312 or article III judges. Is that correct, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. BENNET. I am sorry to say, this slate of nominations in S. Res. 520 includes Calendar No. 476, Sara Bailey, of Texas, to be Director of National Drug Control Policy. That position is among those listed in 5 U.S.C. 5312. Therefore, the threshold for cloture on this vote would be three-fifths of those duly chosen and sworn. Is that correct, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. BENNET. I object.

Mr. TILLIS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the