

Statement of Matt Prindiville, Outreach Coordinator Director
Natural Resources Council of Maine

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Good morning. My name is Matt Prindiville and I speak on behalf of the friends, members and staff of the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

Well, this is it folks. Congress is just days away from deciding forever the fate of one of America's most treasured natural landscapes – the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. **Senators Snowe and Collins hold the key to the fate of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the future of our nation's energy policy.** They will cast a historic vote on whether oil drilling will be allowed along Alaska's unspoiled northeastern coastline to indulge our nation's obsession with gas-guzzling SUVs. This historic vote will decide the future of our nation's energy policy because drilling in the Refuge is a political maneuver to open up more pristine areas around the nation to oil drilling. **The coasts of California, Florida and even Maine's precious fishing industry in Georges Bank are all on the chopping block if Congress allows drilling in the Refuge.**

We cannot drill our way to energy independence. Energy experts agree that making cars more fuel-efficient, and investing in clean energy are the most effective things we can do right now to decrease dependence on foreign oil and increase national security.

The nation's people have spoken. A recent Zogby poll had 73% of those polled opposing including drilling revenues in the budget, while only 18% supported it.

We know how the American people feel about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. We know how Mainers feel about it. **I trust that my Senators will listen to their constituents and continue to advocate on behalf of a sensible national energy policy that fosters true energy independence. Our nation's wild places and the environment that we depend on for our livelihood, our prosperity and our emotional and spiritual well-being are counting on them.**

Thank you.