

(May 25, 2006) Lipinski Opposes Drilling in Environmentally Sensitive Artic National Wildlife Refuge

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Artic National Wildlife Refuge

Congressman Continues to Work for Clean American Energy Alternatives

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman Dan Lipinski (IL-3) voted against H.R. 5429 that would open the environmentally sensitive Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to drilling for oil and gas. H.R. 5429 passed the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 225 to 201.

"The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a unique and biologically special place that should be preserved," stated Lipinski. "The undisturbed coastal plain is home to a wide variety of plants and animals and is the only wilderness sanctuary in North America that protects a complete range of the arctic ecosystem. Drilling in this region will not solve our nation's energy problem, but may destroy a rare and valuable ecosystem."

Proponents of drilling in ANWR point to rising energy prices and the oil reserves that exist off the coast of northern Alaska as evidence that drilling in the refuge would help lower the cost of oil. However, even if the oil reserves in ANWR prove to be at the high end of some estimates, oil prices will only be lowered by one penny over the next twenty years.

"Drilling in ANWR fails to lower energy prices today and sets no long term energy strategy for tomorrow," said Lipinski. "We need responsible legislation that encourages conservation and use of alternative forms of energy, reducing our dependence on foreign oil."

"One significant way that I have addressed this issue is by introducing H.R. 5143, the H-Prize Act of 2006, and leading its passage through the House of Representatives. This bill would establish competitively awarded cash prizes for advances in the use of hydrogen energy technology. Hydrogen has proven to have great potential as a clean, secure source of energy, especially valuable for powering our cars. Only by encouraging research and development of sustainable sources of energy can we break our addiction to oil."

Congressman Lipinski previously helped prevent drilling in ANWR when he voted against its inclusion in the 2006 Budget. He is also a cosponsor of H.R. 567, The Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act, which would designate ANWR's coastal plain as Wilderness, giving it additional protection from drilling.

