

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

House Majority News

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House Passes \$1.1 Million for ANWR Effort **Funds to Help Arctic Power in Keeping Pressure on U.S. Senate**

(JUNEAU) – Seeking to build on growing national support for reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil, the House today voted to appropriate \$1.1 million that would be used to encourage the U.S. Senate to allow oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

[House Bill 334](#), sponsored by the House Finance Committee, would authorize the state to appropriate \$1 million to the non-profit organization [Arctic Power](#), which is working to persuade Congress to allow exploration in ANWR, widely believed to be the most prospective site for a major oil strike in the United States. It also would give \$100,000 to support [Kaktovik](#), a Native village inside ANWR, in its efforts to educate the public about its community and ANWR.

“This investment will produce large returns to the state of Alaska,” said Rep. Eldon Mulder (R-Anchorage), chair of the House Finance Committee. “I look at this as a relatively small investment toward our financial future. If we are successful here, hopefully proceeds from ANWR can go toward filling some of the hole in our budget, and can help pay for government services well into the future for all our constituents.”

Royalties and taxes on oil production in ANWR, east of Prudhoe Bay, would help replace the declining state revenues from existing North Slope fields, a primary source of state revenue. In addition, the political and military instability of the Middle East makes it even more imperative for our nation to fully utilize its domestic petroleum reserves, said House Speaker Brian Porter (R-Anchorage).

Mulder noted that the U.S. House of Representatives last year passed legislation authorizing exploration in ANWR, and noted that the strong lobbying efforts by Arctic Power, with the strong support of the Teamsters and other organized labor groups, have built a majority of votes in support of similar legislation in the U.S. Senate. Under Senate rules, 60 votes, or nine more than a simple majority, are required to bring the ANWR bill to the floor for a vote and final passage. President George W. Bush has promised to sign an ANWR bill if approved by Congress.

“This issue is currently being debated in Washington D.C., and we have made significant progress on this issue since it was last before us,” Mulder said. “We not only have a president that supports this package, we have a House of Representatives that passed this bill with a strong vote. That’s strong encouragement at this time.”

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