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**Alaska Wilderness League Action Launches Six-Figure Ad Campaign Targeting Senator Cory Gardner**

*Gardner cast one of the decisive votes to mandate oil leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*

Washington — Today, Alaska Wilderness League Action is launching a six-figure ad buy targeting the environmental and public lands record of Senator Cory Gardner of Colorado and imploring him to reverse course and support legislation authored by Senator Michael Bennett to protect the iconic Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling. [You can view the ads here.](#)

As a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator Gardner helped orchestrate the inclusion of Arctic Refuge drilling language as part of the 2017 Tax Act as a means of circumventing a 60-vote threshold and avoiding a full, fair and open debate. Gardner ultimately cast one of the swing and decisive votes that led to the Arctic Refuge drilling mandate being enacted, ending more than 60 years of bipartisan efforts to safeguard the area.

“Let’s be clear, on the most important public lands vote of his Senate career, Senator Gardner chose to side with oil and gas interests instead of standing up for Colorado values,” **said Gareth Martins, Colorado Political Chair for Alaska Wilderness League Action (Boulder, CO).** “The Arctic Refuge is a national treasure that belongs to all Americans. By rolling back more than 60 years of bipartisan protections for this cherished landscape, Senator Gardner has sent a message that no protected national park or wildlife refuge in Colorado or around the country is safe.”

The ad campaign consists of broadcast TV advertisements served to the Denver media market, as well as OTT/Video on Demand and digital advertising running statewide.

The ad buy also coincides with the release of [a letter signed by Colorado-based and national conservation organizations](#) including Rocky Mountain Values, Sierra Club Colorado, Wilderness Society Action Fund and League of Conservation Voters urging Senator Gardner to support protections for the Arctic Refuge and oppose the administration’s fast-tracked process to hold a lease sale there prior to the 2020 election.

“While masquerading as a public lands champion, Senator Gardner has quietly taken more than \$1.5 million from the oil and gas industry during his time in Washington and has been delivering on its wish list,” **said Adam Kolton, executive director of Alaska Wilderness League Action.** “He is badly out of step



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with what the people of Colorado want, which is to safeguard our national treasures for future generations, not squander them for the sole purpose of helping Big Oil.”

“Senator Gardner has said that ‘we must be good stewards of our natural environment’, but then he votes to open the Arctic Refuge? Actions speak louder than words and one can’t claim to be a supporter of public lands like Senator Gardner does and then vote to drill in America’s largest refuge,” **said Sam Mix, spokesperson for Osprey Packs Inc. (Cortez, CO)**

Gardner has [voted in lock step with President Trump 89 percent of the time](#) despite Coloradans [“strongly rejecting Trump administration policies on conservation and public lands.”](#) Polling released by the [Yale Program on Climate Change Communication](#) in 2019 shows 69% of Coloradans oppose drilling in the Arctic Refuge. In addition, [more than 100 local Colorado businesses](#) like Osprey Packs, MountainSmith, Alpacka Raft and Backpacker’s Pantry submitted a letter to Senators Gardner and Bennet imploring them to oppose the oil and gas leasing in the Arctic Refuge.

"Senator Gardner continues to claim that the environment and our public lands are a priority for him," **said Jim Alexee, Director of Colorado Sierra Club.** "However, his pro-oil and gas agenda have proven otherwise. Gardner's support of drilling in The Arctic Refuge is another example of the lack of support he provides for national and public land protection as well as how unaligned he is with Colorado's values."

“When Gardner says he cares about the ‘grandeur and beauty of public lands,’ he is lying,” **said Clare Gallagher, Protect Our Winters athlete and advocate for public lands protection and climate change mitigation (Boulder, CO).** “He has never voted nor acted to protect the Arctic. Colorado needs real leaders representing us, the majority of whom want to see the Arctic Refuge permanently protected.”

“Failing to hold the Trump administration accountable for its rushed lease sale process, for repeatedly sidelining and silencing its own scientists, for refusing to conduct recommended new studies, and for [burying expert concerns](#) about impacts to hundreds of thousands of calving caribou, denning polar bears, and millions of nesting and staging migratory birds not only threatens the Arctic Refuge but undermines the entire National Wildlife Refuge System,” **added Adam Kolton, Alaska Wilderness League Action.** “By making oil and gas a purpose of a national wildlife refuge for the very first time in history, Senator Gardner established a dangerous precedent for reversing public land protections in Colorado and around the country.”

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*Alaska Wilderness Action was founded in 2004 with the goal of strengthening the efforts to protect wild Alaska. Please note: Alaska Wilderness Action is an affiliated but separate organization from Alaska Wilderness League. As a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization, Alaska Wilderness Action engages in various advocacy and political activities for which Alaska Wilderness League, a 501(c)(3) organization, faces certain legal limitations or restrictions. **News and information released by the Alaska Wilderness Action therefore must be identified as coming from Alaska Wilderness Action.***



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