

PUBLIC LANDS ENEMY #7



Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska)

Sponsored Bills: 7; Cosponsored Bills: 168

Total Possible Bills: 84

U.S. House of Representatives (1973-Present), Alaska At-Large Member, Committee on Natural Resources

Chairman, Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs

Member, Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Alaska's representative in the House, Don Young, has been in office since 1973. Between 2011 and 2016, he sponsored or cosponsored 25 out of 84 of the anti-public lands bills introduced in the House, earning him the title of Public Lands Enemy #7. Young has introduced many bills with the goal of seizing authority for management of federal lands including national forests. Alaska contains some of the most ecologically important and magnificent public lands in the country including the Tongass National Forest — that contains some of the most intact expanses of temperate rainforests in the world — and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on the north Alaska coast, home to America's last polar bears and porcupine caribou. With oil revenues dominating Alaska's economy, any federal rules or laws that protect Alaska's world-renowned public lands are met with fierce resistance from Young.

Young's bill, [H.R. 3294](#), gives states management authority over most federal lands, from which they would predictably maximize revenue at the expense of wildlife and the environment. While states would bear few costs, but stand to profit from this exploitation, Americans would be left to foot the bill for costly management activities, including wildfire suppression and road maintenance.

Another bill Young introduced, [H.R. 3650](#), would force the sale of up to 2 million acres of national forests, resulting in the logging of many remaining old-growth forests. [H.R. 2526](#), would exempt Alaska's Tongass National Forest from protection under the landmark Roadless Area Conservation Rule that prohibits road building and facilitates logging in our remaining intact portions of national forest. Young bill [H.R. 5777](#), dubbed the "road to nowhere," would hand over public land to the state of Alaska in order to build a road through the heart of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, a globally important area for millions of migrating birds, as well as bear and salmon. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has said the road would cause significant long-term, ongoing and irreparable damage to important fish, wildlife, habitat and wilderness values of the refuge.

Finally, Young tried to strip the president's authority to designate new national monuments with [H.R. 330](#) and the power of the secretary of the interior to designate national marine sanctuaries in the state of Alaska with [H.R. 332](#) and [H.R. 5389](#).

Young is a longtime foe of public lands, introducing bills to hand America's federal lands to states since at least 1979 when he introduced the [Western Lands Distribution Act](#) that would allow states to seize ownership of much of the public land within their borders. He has also been a longtime proponent of opening up the [Arctic National Wildlife Refuge](#) to oil and gas extraction. The oil and gas industry has been Young's largest donor, contributing at least [\\$1,365,368](#) to his political campaigns during his time in office. His [#1 and #2 individual donors](#) have been Veco Corp. (\$231,620) and Edison Chouest Offshore (\$185,400).

In 2010 Young showed that his allegiance lies with industry and not public land, saying, about Alaska’s majestic frozen landscape, one of the last truly wild places in the country, “There’s nothing pretty about ice. Ice grows nothing,”²⁷ calling climate change “the biggest scam since Teapot Dome,”²⁸ and maintaining that the Deepwater Horizon oil spill was “not an environmental disaster.”²⁹

Anti-Public Lands Bills Sponsored or Cosponsored by Young:

Bill Type	Sponsored	Cosponsored
Land Seizure National Forest Giveaway for Logging (H.R. 3650) Izembek Wildlife Refuge Giveaway (H.R. 5777) State Choice of 5 Percent of Public Lands (H.R. 2852) Public Lands Sale for “Recreation” (H.R. 5836) Oak Flat Land Trade (H.R. 1904) No Increase in Public Land (H.R. 4423)	 X X 	 X X X X
Private/County/State Control of Public Lands State Management of Federal Lands (H.R. 3294) Community Forest Demo Areas (H.R. 2316) Community Forest Demo Areas (H.R. 1294) Local Control of Public Land Access (H.R. 4272) Community Forest Demo Areas (H.R. 6009) State Beetle Kill Timber Projects (H.R. 818) State Beetle Kill Timber Projects (H.R. 6089) State Control, Fisheries and Hunters (H.R. 2406)	 X 	 X X X X X X X
Weakening Federal Protections No Roadless Rule in Alaska (H.R. 2526) Logging Priority on Forests (H.R. 1526)	 X 	 X
No More Parks, Monuments, Refuges No Monuments in Marine Econ Zone (H.R. 330) No Marine Sanctuary Designation (H.R. 332) No Marine Sanctuary Designation (H.R. 5389) Limiting New Wildlife Refuges (H.R. 638) Limiting New Marine Monuments (H.R. 4988) State Monument Approval (H.R. 382) No New Monuments (H.R. 817) State Approval of Monuments (H.R. 4132) Wildlife Refuges by Act of Congress (H.R. 3009)	 X X X 	 X X X X X X

²⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKcmjBBtxrs>

²⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKcmjBBtxrs>

²⁹ <https://thinkprogress.org/rep-don-young-says-the-gulf-oil-gusher-is-not-an-environmental-disaster-6d5f4ba3fe6a#.e8yqh0i3w>

Campaign Contributors ([2016 Election](#) as of December 2016, source: Center for Responsive Politics):

- Oil & Gas Industry:
 - \$74,050
- Energy & Natural Resources Sector:
 - \$142,300
- Major Funders (in Young's Top 100 Contributors, 2016 Election):
 - **Oil and Gas:** Edison Chouest Offshore (\$28,300), ConocoPhillips (\$10,000), Exxon Mobil (\$9,000), Northern Energy Services (\$5,400), Cruz Construction (\$5,400), Tesoro Corp. (\$4,500), BP (\$4,000), Occidental Petroleum (\$3,000)
 - **Trophy Hunting:** Safari Club International (\$7,000)
 - **Conglomerates:** General Electric (\$3,000)

League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard:

[Lifetime](#): 9 percent