

PUBLIC LANDS ENEMY #5



Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.)

Sponsored Bills: 8; Cosponsored Bills: 4;

Total Possible Bills: 48

U.S. Senate (2007-Present)

Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Member, Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining

Member, Subcommittee on National Parks

Member, Subcommittee on Water and Power

Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works

John Barrasso, Wyoming's senator since 2007, ranks as Public Lands Enemy #5. Between 2011 and 2016, Barrasso introduced 8 and cosponsored 4 out of 48 of the anti-public lands bills we identified. Senator Barrasso is generously funded by campaign donations from fossil fuel corporations and is well situated to look out for their interests with his posts on two key congressional committees — Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) and Environment and Public Works (EPW). As member and former chair of the Senate's ENR subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, Barrasso has outsize influence on legislation that effects actions on public lands including, but not limited to mining, oil, gas and coal extraction, grazing, logging and establishing wildlife refuges and wilderness areas. As chair of EPW, he also oversees the Endangered Species Act.

Over the years, Barrasso has moved from a moderate, pragmatic conservative to a hard right ideologue and has been called "[one of the most partisan people in the Senate](#)." During Barrasso's career, the oil and gas industry has been his second biggest supporter, having contributed [more than \\$600,000](#) to his political campaigns. His [major contributors between 2011 and 2016](#) include a "who's who" of the oil, gas and coal industries largest corporations including Koch Industries, Exxon, Chevron, Andarko Petroleum and Peabody Energy.

Fossil fuels interests seeking to profit from oil and gas development on public lands, have benefited from a shift in views on climate change by Senator Barrasso. He has moved from recognizing the inevitability of legislation passing and that "[greenhouse] gases [are] contributing to the warming of the planet. The best science tells us it is a factor"²³ to publically questioning the science and introducing a bill to prevent the regulation of greenhouse gases.

[Barrasso has not let his fiscal conservatism dampen his enthusiasm for coal subsidies](#), which usually come in the form of tax breaks, such as tax-exempt bonding and loan guarantees for coal facilities, which cost taxpayers billions.

Between 2011 and 2016, the senator introduced three bills, [S. 1087](#), [S. 193](#), and [S. 1967](#), that would strip protections from millions of acres of forest roadless areas protected under the landmark Roadless Area Conservation Rule or areas that are otherwise identified and managed for their wilderness values. [S. 1966](#), another of Barrasso's bills, would legislatively mandate logging levels on national forests, prevent citizens from challenging illegal logging in the courts, shield timber corporations from federal laws that require less damaging alternatives to be considered, and give counties revenue from logging national forests thereby creating a perverse incentive to increase cutting. Barrasso also sponsored [S. 258](#) and [S. 1129](#), which would favor livestock operators on federal lands by doubling the length of federal grazing leases to 20 years while eliminating normally required disclosure of impacts to land, wildlife, water and soil from grazing.

²³ <http://www.wyofile.com/barrasso-profile/>

In 2015 Barrasso introduced legislation ([S. 2318](#)) that would have significantly decreased funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) — one of America’s most important conservation programs. The LWCF use revenues primarily from the depletion of one natural resource —offshore oil and gas — to support the conservation of other precious resources, our land and water. Barrasso’s bill not only would decrease federal acquisition of important natural areas, but would also mandate that most LWCF funds be given to states, which can spend money on planning and development at the expense of acquisition of natural areas.

In 2016 Senator Barrasso led the creation of the GOP Party Platform, which states: “Congress shall immediately pass universal legislation providing for a timely and orderly mechanism requiring the federal government to convey certain federally controlled public land to states.”

Anti-Public Lands Bills Sponsored or Cosponsored by Barrasso:

Bill Type	Sponsored	Cosponsored
Private/County/State Control of Public Lands LWCF Emphasis on States (S. 2318)	X	
Weakening Federal Protections Oil and Gas Leasing Increase (S. 1027) Remove Wilderness Management (S. 1087) No Roadless Rule in Wyoming (S. 193) Remove Wilderness Management (S. 1967) Weakens Grazing Management (S. 258) Weakens Grazing Management (S. 1129) Logging Priority on Forests (S. 1966) No More Uranium Withdrawal (S. 1690)	X X X X X X X	X
No More Parks, Monuments, Refuges State Approval of Land Designations (S. 2473) No New Monuments (S. 407) No New Monuments (S. 2004)		X X X

Campaign Contributors (2011-2016, as of December 2016, source: Center for Responsive Politics):

- Oil & Gas Industry:
 - \$577,966
- Energy & Natural Resources Sector:
 - \$1,316,400
- Major Funders (in Barrasso’s Top 100 Contributors, 2011-2016):
 - **Oil & Gas:** Anadarko Petroleum (\$31,000), Chevron Corp. (\$26,250), Marathon Oil (\$25,000), Sinclair Companies (\$22,500), Mewbourne Oil Company (\$22,466), Occidental Petroleum (\$18,300), Exxon Mobil (\$17,750), Valero Energy (\$18,500), BP (\$18,000)
 - **Coal:** Alpha Natural Resources (\$52,950), Murray Energy Corp. (\$41,781), Peabody Energy (\$18,000)
 - **Energy:** Southern Co. (\$41,000), PPL Corp. (\$33,000), FirstEnergy Corp. (\$27,000), Williams Companies (\$24,000), Exelon Corp. (\$22,500)
 - **Conglomerates:** Koch Industries (\$44,900), General Electric (\$21,500)

League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard:

[Lifetime](#): 9 percent