Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2003

The Honorable Jim Nussle
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
309 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Nussle:

We are writing to express our opposition to any language in the fiscal year 2004 budget resolution that assumes revenue from drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. While we share your desire to develop a fiscally responsible budget blueprint, we believe that the inclusion of language related to the Refuge will create unnecessary controversy when the budget is considered by the full House.

As you know, the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is currently protected against additional oil and gas exploration or development. Because of the unique nature of this natural treasure, Congress in 1980 prohibited oil and gas exploration or production on the coastal plain of the Refuge. Repealing these protections is opposed by millions of Americans, Republicans and Democrats alike. While we welcome open debate on the issue of opening the Refuge, we believe that the best vehicle for such debate is as part of a larger energy bill, or stand alone legislation, but not the budget resolution.

We ask that you help ensure that we work together to promote a common agenda, and reject any requests to assume revenue from drilling. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Johnson

Christopher Shays

James Greenwood

[illegible]

Charles F. Bass

Ralph A. LoBiondo

Wayne T. Gilchrest

Sherry Boehlert

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Glenn Kirr

Jim Ramstad

Mike Castle