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Refuge Friends Voices Not Allowed to be Heard by Congress in Rare Objection during Hearing on Refuge Bills

At a Congressional hearing today in the House Natural Resources Subcommittee for Federal Lands, Ranking Member Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI) attempted to enter into the record a [letter](#) from the National Wildlife Refuge Association, Friends of Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (MA), Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges (AK) and 100 other refuge Friends groups nationwide stating opposition to two bills, H.R. 218 and H.R. 1157. Respectively, the bills would authorize a road through the Izembek NWR in Alaska and a boundary change at the Monomoy NWR in Massachusetts effectively cutting that refuge in half.

Unfortunately, [Congressman Don Young \(R-AK\) raised a rare objection](#) to our letter being entered into the record on the premise that Ranking Member Hanabusa is not from his state. However, the letter is from groups located not only in the two states impacted by the bills, but by groups nationwide representing hundreds of national wildlife refuges. Friends across the United States have a vested interest in these two bills as both could be used as precedents to undertake similar actions at their own refuges and would impact the integrity of the System as a whole.

Our national wildlife refuges belong to all Americans, and the voices of Friends, the Refuge System's most ardent supporters, should not be silenced when it comes to such monumental decisions affecting our National Wildlife Refuge System.

We strongly disagree with Congressman Don Young's attempt to ignore the voices of thousands of Americans who care passionately for their public lands. It is wrong that their views should not be considered by Congress as they make such far-reaching decisions with these two bills.

We are working with other members of the subcommittee to ensure the voices of refuge Friends and all Americans will be heard on these vitally important issues and that our letter is a part of the official record.

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The National Wildlife Refuge Association is the only independent nonprofit that promotes and protects the world's largest wildlife conservation network: the National Wildlife Refuge System. Learn more at: refugeassociation.org.