

Opposition Groups Gave 14 Times As Much to Senators Who Voted Against Oil Subsidies

Article By:

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The U.S. Senate on Thursday voted down a motion to consider a bill that [would repeal tax benefits for the largest oil & gas companies](#). Supporters fell nine votes short of the 60 needed to proceed. The bill would redirect the funds saved to extend tax credits for renewable energy.

The bill ([S 2204](#)) is supported by [Environmental policy](#) interest groups such as the [League of Conservation Voters](#) and the Natural Resources Defense Council, [Consumer groups](#) such as Public Citizen, and [Alternative energy production and services groups](#) such as Growth Energy. The bill is opposed by Major (multinational) oil & gas producers, Petroleum refining & marketing, Republican/Conservative, Manufacturing, Chambers of commerce, and Fiscal & tax policy interest groups such as [ExxonMobil](#), the American Petroleum Institute, Heritage Action for America, National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Taxpayers Union.

The vote fell mostly along party lines with most Republicans voting against the motion and most Democrats voting for it. Two Republicans, [Olympia Snowe \(R-ME\)](#) and [Susan Collins \(R-ME\)](#), voted 'YES,' however, while four Democrats, [Mark Begich \(D-AK\)](#), [Mary Landrieu \(D-LA\)](#), [Ben Nelson \(D-NE\)](#), and [Jim Webb \(D-VA\)](#), voted 'NO.'

Democrats Mary Landrieu, Ben Nelson, and Mark Begich were also [three of only four senators](#) who voted against beginning debate on the bill. The three senators also voted against a procedural vote on a similar bill, [S 940-Close Big Oil Tax Loopholes Act](#), in May 2011. All three senators include the [Oil & gas](#) industry among their top 10 contributing interests.

MapLight has conducted an analysis of campaign contributions from interest groups invested in the vote to members of the U.S. Senate between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2011.

- Interest groups that **opposed this motion** (Republican/Conservative, Major (multinational) oil & gas producers, Petroleum refining & marketing, Manufacturing, Chambers of commerce, and Fiscal & tax policy) [gave on average 14 times as much](#) to senators who voted 'NO' (\$264,051) as they did to senators who voted 'YES' (\$18,561).
- Major (multinational) oil & gas producers and Petroleum refining & marketing interest groups that **opposed this motion** gave an average of [6.2 times as much](#) to senators who voted 'NO'

(\$75,713) as they gave to senators who voted 'YES' (\$12,185).

- Interest groups that **supported this motion** (Environmental policy, Alternate energy production & services, and Consumer groups) [gave on average 5.9 times as much](#) to senators who voted 'YES' (\$67,753) as to senators who voted 'NO' (\$11,467).
- Alternate energy production & services interest groups that **supported this motion** [gave an average of over 2 times as much](#) to Senators that voted 'YES' (\$13,152) than to Senators that voted 'NO' (\$6,117).
- All four senators who [voted against beginning debate on S 2204](#) count the Oil & gas industry among their top 10 contributing interests. Oil & gas groups are [Jim Inhofe's](#) largest ([\\$472,000](#)), [Mary Landrieu's](#) third largest ([\\$424,700](#)), [Mark Begich's](#) fourth largest ([\\$145,405](#)), and [Ben Nelson's](#) 10th largest ([\\$193,550](#)) contributors.

METHODOLOGY: MapLight analysis of reported contributions to congressional campaigns of members of the U.S. Senate from interest groups invested in the vote from July 1, 2005–June 30, 2011. Campaign contributions data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics ([OpenSecrets.org](#)).

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