



## **KERRY-LIEBERMAN CLIMATE BILL RESTARTS OVERDUE SENATE CLIMATE DEBATE**

*“Wild places cannot afford to wait,” says The Wilderness Society President*

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WASHINGTON – May 12, 2010 – The long awaited climate and energy bill from Senators John Kerry (Mass.) and Joseph Lieberman (Conn.) will have a major effect on public lands, according to The Wilderness Society.

“Our public lands are threatened by the wanton discharge of global warming pollutants into the air, a dangerous practice that needs to be stopped. The bill from Senators Kerry and Lieberman is a welcome and important step to advance this critical debate,” said William H. Meadows, President of The Wilderness Society.

The bill would drive down the emissions of the greenhouse gases which have begun to increase widespread stress on our natural systems through severe weather events, drought, fire and flooding.

“Already a changing climate has cost Glacier National Park a third of its iconic glaciers – a grim story that will be repeated with other treasured landscapes if we do not act to cut emissions,” said Meadows.

The bill also contains provisions intended to help our communities and public lands adapt to unavoidable effects of climate change, but appears to be funded at levels that are insufficient to properly protect those communities and natural systems.

“Our public lands need the means to adapt to a changing climate – by removing old dams and logging roads, fighting invasive species that threaten native plants and animals, and restoring forests and wetlands,” said Meadows. “These activities promote job growth at an incredible scale, but only if they are properly funded.”

Despite the recent catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico, the bill also includes provisions to promote new off-shore drilling, including off the Alaskan coast, which The Wilderness Society opposes.

“We’ve seen the devastation that drilling can have on our coastal economies and natural areas,” stated Meadows. “Promoting the types of activity that led to the disaster in the Gulf could lead to an even worse tragedy in the Arctic, destroying whale, walrus, seal and polar bear habitat. The Wilderness Society will be working to strengthen these and other provisions, such as the definition of biomass, which threaten our public lands and increase emissions.”

*The Wilderness Society is the leading public-lands conservation organization working to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care about our wild places. Founded in 1935, and now with more than 500,000 members and supporters, TWS has led the effort to permanently protect 110 million acres in 44 states. [www.wilderness.org](http://www.wilderness.org)*