

Environmental Studies 137 - B: *ANWR Project*

- Overview:** An energy bill which may allow for oil drilling in the Alaska Wilderness Wildlife Refuge is currently being considered by the United States Senate. This topic has been hotly debated between those who believe that drilling would provide significant economic benefit by partially alleviating dependence on foreign oil and those who argue that the environmental costs of drilling would far outweigh any such gain.
- Assignment:** You are asked to compose a letter to one of Minnesota's two United States Senators, Mark Dayton or Norm Coleman, and state and discuss whether you support or oppose oil drilling in ANWR. In either case, you should present arguments both for and against this proposal and weigh the relative merits and importance of each. Please note that you will not be penalized should you choose to support drilling so long as your arguments are well-supported and carefully thought out, which is also required for those who oppose drilling. Your letter should reflect a thorough understanding of the issues surrounding this debate that impact Alaska, Minnesota, the United States, and the world as a whole. Likewise, you should consider each senator's current and past positions on the issue.
- Specifics:** Letters will be evaluated on content, organization, and presentation of opinion. Although it is generally advisable that letters to politicians be as succinct as possible, because these are doubling as assignments, they will need to be somewhat lengthier. Letters should be approximately a thousand words long. It is not necessary to mention that this is an assignment for a class, but you may do so if you wish. In order to increase your chances of receiving a response, it would certainly be wise to mention that you are from Minnesota, either as a resident or as a student. Finally, please keep in mind that a respectful tone will benefit your position greatly.
- Dates:** This project is due on October 30. It is possible that by this date the energy bill will have already moved through the Senate, so if you are concerned about your work possibly making a difference, I would recommend completing this project sooner.
- Contact:** <http://www.senate.gov/~coleman/contact/index.cfm>
<http://dayton.senate.gov/webform.html>