



## Senate Energy Bill Would Move Northwest Projects Forward

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The twelve votes against the bill all came from Republicans.

The Senate bill will now need to be reconciled with a less-encompassing energy bill already passed by the House of Representatives. "We've got our work cut out for us", Murkowski said.

A few major differences stand out.

The provision is one of several backed by U.S. Sens. "Chief among them are the inclusion of solar heating and cooling as technologies that can meet the federal government's renewable portfolio standard, language directing the Energy Department to identify appropriate costs and benefits for the valuation of distributed generation solar, provisions to improve permitting of solar *power* plants sited on federal lands, and directing the Energy Department to study avian populations and to establish baseline scientific information".

Opposing the bill were Republican Sens.

Environmental policy analyst Peter Van Doren of the Cato Institute told The Christian *Science* Monitor by phone that the reason this bill had passed was less due to genuine goodwill than the success of each side's agenda. She has to convince the House to head to conference, and likely jettison some more partisan House-passed measures that drew a White House veto threat past year.

"The Senate definitely did its job today", said Cantwell, referencing Senate Democrats' mantra in the fight over confirming Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court. That bland nature of the legislation reduces the motivation lawmakers have to move forward, especially if it doesn't include their favored provisions. "That's what's working in this process", Cantwell said of Murkowski's ability to get the bill to a bicameral compromise. "Otherwise I don't know how significant the bill really is, to be honest". Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, who co-sponsored the bill.

"I have framed my energy policy into three simple words... energy is good", she said on the Senate floor.

The legislation does speed up permitting of liquified natural gas exports.

In specific, the legislation would permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Act, a 51-year-old program in which some federal oil and gas revenues to protecting wild places and historic sites.

It would have been a fairer deal if Sen.

There are some caveats to the Sierra Club's complaints. The bill seeks to add predictability to decision-making on LNG exports by requiring DOE to approve or disapprove applications to export to non-free trade agreement countries within 45 days of the National Environmental Policy Act review at the US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission or the Maritime Administration.

A Bennet-backed measure included in the bill would allow mortgage lenders to consider the energy efficiency of the house and expected monthly energy bills when determining the borrower's ability to afford monthly mortgage payments.

Authorizes a 7 percent increase in funding each year for basic energy research and reauthorizes the Department of Energy's Office of *Science* and ARPA-E, an agency that supports research in energy technology, for five years. "It will also repeal a ban on fossil fuel generated energy at federal buildings created by Section 433 of the 2007 energy bill, replacing that section with widely supported fuel-neutral energy efficiency policies for new and renovated federal buildings".