# BUTCH OTTER

Republican Clement Leroy “Butch” Otter (DOB: 5/3/42) has been serving as Governor of Idaho since 2007. Prior to his election as governor, Otter served in Congress from 2001 to 2006 and as Lt. Governor of Idaho from 1987 to 2001. Otter has long been a proponent of devolving control of federal lands to the states, although in recent years he has become an advocate of a “sharecropping” system where the federal government retains ownership of the lands while being managed by the state. In 2005, Otter proposed selling millions of acres of federal land to finance Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts, but quickly retreated from that position in the face of backlash from Idaho residents and media. As a member of Congress, Otter voted repeatedly to open public lands, including ANWR and coastal regions, to oil and gas exploration or increased logging. Otter has been extensively supported by oil and gas, timber and mining interests throughout his political career.

Key findings include:

**2007: Otter Acknowledged Climate Change And Called For A Statewide Greenhouse Gas Inventory.** “Scientists and energy experts stood on a podium at the University of Idaho on Monday and proclaimed that the debate over climate change is dead. Humans are making the planet warmer, they told the audience at the university’s inaugural sustainability symposium. Gov. Butch Otter also took a turn at the microphone. Otter is not known as a climate change bulldog. Earlier this year, he continued to question the link between humans and global warming, and he was noticeably absent at a July meeting of Western governors aimed at addressing the issue. But on Monday, the governor said the debate was moot. ‘No matter what theory you accept or what evidence you recognize, the public reality is that our climate is getting warmer,’ Otter said. ‘We ignore reality at our own peril. … We must think of adapting to a changing climate in ways the public and marketplace can accept.’ Addressing climate change is simply a matter of wise energy policy, he said. In May, Otter signed an executive order that called for an inventory of statewide greenhouse gas emissions. The order also directed state agencies to develop plans to reduce emissions.” [Spokane Spokesman-Review, [10/2/07](http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2007/oct/02/governor-admits-climate-is-warming/)]

**2017: Otter Supported Ryan Zinke’s Changes To The Sage Grouse Protection Plan That Allowed States Greater Flexibility To Allow Mining And Logging In Prohibited Areas.** “Idaho Gov. Butch Otter said Monday he is ‘encouraged’ by changes to the federal plan to protect the threatened sage grouse that give Western states greater flexibility to allow mining, logging and other economic development where it now is prohibited ‘"This is an appropriate step toward empowering Idaho to proactively manage and conserve sage grouse populations while preserving the customs and culture of the state,’ Otter told the Statesman. ‘However, much remains to be done. My staff and I stand ready to roll up our sleeves and work with the Department of the Interior to bring the federal plans into alignment with Idaho's science-based conservation plan.’ Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Monday announced the strategy for the ground-dwelling bird that has suffered a dramatic population decline across its 11-state range. Zinke insisted that the federal government and the states can work together to protect the sage grouse and its habitat while not slowing economic growth and job creation.” [Idaho Statesman, 8/7/17]

**2016: Otter Called For State-Federal Collaboration On The Endangered Species Act.** “Idaho Gov. C.L. ‘Butch’ Otter welcomed participants to the Idaho workshop of the Western Governors' Species Conservation and Endangered Species Act Initiative on Tuesday (Jan. 19), also urging them to be ‘willing to engage, to listen to the other side's point of view.’ ‘Idaho in many ways has the best answer to the Endangered Species Act, and that's through collaborative discussions. Did I always think that? No. But what it comes down to is the input we have, to be a part of the process, to be heard,’ said Gov. Otter, speaking at the second regional workshop of the Chairman's Initiative of Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead for the Western Governors' Association at the Riverside Hotel in Boise, Idaho. […] Gov. Otter, like Gov. Mead before him, lamented the low rate (1.3%) for delisting of species under the ESA since its creation 42 years ago. ‘By any measure, that is a terrible success rate. To continue on with the same process is irresponsible. So I hope we can come up with an innovative process through which we can resolve this issue.’” [Western Governors Association Press Release, 1/19/16]

**2018: Otter Said He Would Prefer A “Sharecropping” Arrangement Where The Federal Government Owns Land, But The States Manage It.** “He shared his views with the president's son when he was being courted to be secretary of Agriculture, Otter said. Donald Trump Jr. wondered if he believed federal land should to be shifted to private ownership. Otter said he agreed with that position during the Sagebrush Rebellion in 1976. That was when ranchers in the West objected to a change in the Bureau of Land Management's priorities to include some preservation. ‘I was right there leading the parade,’ he said. ‘I was so angry with what was happening in Idaho that I thought nobody could screw up a job as bad as the Interior Department and Forest Service had in Idaho.’ Now he wants to be a ‘sharecropper’ on federal land. ‘That's where you own the land, and I manage the land for you,’ he said.” [Idaho Statesman, 3/29/18]

**2002: Otter Blamed Mismanagement Of National Forests, “Aggressive Fire Suppression Efforts And Environmental Obstructionists” For Wildfires.** “Healthy, sustainable forests are at the heart of a resolution cosponsored by Congressman C.L. "Butch" Otter that was approved by the House Resources Committee and sent to the full House on Wednesday The bill (H. Con. Res. 352) expresses the intent of Congress that all federal land management agencies fully implement the Western Governors' Association's ‘Collaborative 10-year Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment.’ […] ‘Enormous, catastrophic wildfires are a scourge on the landscape, our economy and too often our very lives. They're all the more unfortunate because in many cases they are unnecessary,’ Otter said. ‘For too long mismanagement has allowed our national forests to become overgrown, insect-infested, diseased and congested with dead and dying trees - trees that might have been a valuable resource for the timber mills that once provided jobs in our rural communities. Instead, neglect, aggressive fire suppression efforts and environmental obstructionists have combined to create incendiary conditions that idle mills, stifle rural economies and put the forests themselves at risk.’” [Rep. Butch Otter Press Release, 5/22/02]

## Climate Change

**2007: Otter Acknowledged Climate Change And Called For A Statewide Greenhouse Gas Inventory.** “Scientists and energy experts stood on a podium at the University of Idaho on Monday and proclaimed that the debate over climate change is dead. Humans are making the planet warmer, they told the audience at the university’s inaugural sustainability symposium. Gov. Butch Otter also took a turn at the microphone. Otter is not known as a climate change bulldog. Earlier this year, he continued to question the link between humans and global warming, and he was noticeably absent at a July meeting of Western governors aimed at addressing the issue. But on Monday, the governor said the debate was moot. ‘No matter what theory you accept or what evidence you recognize, the public reality is that our climate is getting warmer,’ Otter said. ‘We ignore reality at our own peril. … We must think of adapting to a changing climate in ways the public and marketplace can accept.’ Addressing climate change is simply a matter of wise energy policy, he said. In May, Otter signed an executive order that called for an inventory of statewide greenhouse gas emissions. The order also directed state agencies to develop plans to reduce emissions.” [Spokane Spokesman-Review, [10/2/07](http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2007/oct/02/governor-admits-climate-is-warming/)]

### Key Votes

**2005: Otter Voted For The 2005 Version Of The Bush Energy Bill, Which Promoted US Dependence On Oil.** The 2005 version of the Bush administration energy bill included numerous provisions objected to by environmentalists, including opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling; shielding manufacturers of the toxic gasoline additive MTBE from lawsuits for contaminating drinking water; preempting the ability of states to regulate the siting of liquefied natural gas terminals; exempting certain oil and gas drilling activities from the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act; giving cities more time to reduce smog pollution without requiring them to put stronger pollution controls in place; providing billions in tax breaks to oil companies. A vote AGAINST the bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2005.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #132, [4/21/05](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2005/roll132.xml)]

* **2005: Otter Voted For The Conference Report For The Bush Energy Bill.** A conference committee combined H.R. 6 with a Senate companion bill, dropping some of the most controversial provisions, including Arctic drilling, MTBE liability shields, and smog cleanup delays. However, the new version still weakened key environmental protections for oil and gas drilling, added billions in new subsidies for coal, oil and nuclear power, and stripped states and local governments of their authority over liquefied natural gas terminal siting. A vote AGAINST the bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2005.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #445, [7/28/05](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2005/roll445.xml)]

**2005: Otter Opposed Raising Fuel Economy Standards For Cars And Light Trucks.** During consideration of H.R. 6, the House energy bill, Representatives Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) and Ed Markey (D-MA) proposed an amendment to raise the CAFE standard for cars and light trucks to 33 miles per gallon by 2016. If enacted, House Amendment 73 would have saved one million barrels of oil a day by 2016 and would have prevented the annual release of 150 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. A vote IN FAVOR of the Boehlert-Markey amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2005.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #121, [4/20/05](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2005/roll121.xml)]

**2004: Otter Voted Against Depoliticizing Science.** During consideration of H.R. 2432, the Paperwork and Regulatory Improvements Act, Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA) and John Tierney (D-MA) offered an amendment to create a bipartisan, independent commission of scientists and governmental and public Administration officials that would study the politicization of science and recommend ways to protect scientific analysis from political manipulation and interference. A vote IN FAVOR of the Waxman-Tierney amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2004.pdf); HR 2432, House Roll Call Vote #187, [5/18/04](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/roll187.xml)]

**2003: Otter Voted For The 2003 Bush Energy Bill, Which Gave Billions To The Fossil Fuel Industry.** Early in 2003, House leaders introduced a bill based on President Bush’s plan. HR 6 included more than $37 billion in corporate tax breaks and subsidies for the coal, oil, nuclear and natural gas industries. It also gave the Interior Secretary authority to exempt oil companies from paying for drilling rights on public lands, and it included a provision to allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The House bill also largely failed to advance clean, efficient energy technologies and failed to increase automobile fuel efficiency standards. The undermined clean water protections by shielding makers of the gasoline additive MTBE from existing lawsuits for contaminating drinking water and exempting all oil and gas construction activities--including roads, drill pads, pipeline corridors, refineries, and compressor stations--from having to control stormwater runoff under the Clean Water Act**.** A vote AGAINST the energy bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #145, [4/11/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll145.xml)]

* **2004: Otter Again Voted For The Bush Energy Bill.** In June 2004, House leadership called a second vote on the conference report for the Bush administration’s energy bill. A vote AGAINST the bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2004.pdf); HR 4503, House Roll Call Vote #241, [6/15/04](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/roll241.xml)]

**2003: Otter Opposed Reducing The Amount Of Oil Consumed By US Automobiles.** Representatives Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) and Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced an amendment to the energy bill instructing the Department of Transportation to reduce the amount of oil consumed by US automobiles by five percent by 2010. The amendment left it up to the administration to determine how to achieve the reduction. A vote IN FAVOR of the Boehlert-Markey amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #132, [4/10/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll132.xml)]

**2001: Otter Voted For The 2001 Bush Energy Bill Emphasizing Fossil Fuel Production At The Expense Of Cleaner Renewable Energy.**  HR 4, the Bush administration energy package, opened the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other public lands to oil drilling and other energy development and gave polluting energy companies more than $38 billion in new or expanded taxpayer-funded handouts. The oil and gas industries alone received more than $21 billion in subsidies, mostly through tax breaks. A vote AGAINST the energy bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2001.pdf); HR 4, House Roll Call Vote #320, [8/1/01](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2001/roll320.xml)]

**2001: Otter Opposed Raising Fuel Economy Standards For Light Trucks.** During consideration of H.R. 4, the 2001 House energy bill, Representatives Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) and Edward Markey (D-MA) introduced an amendment to increase fuel economy standards by closing the light truck loophole. The amendment would have combined light trucks and cars into one fleet that would have been required to meet a 27.5 miles-per-gallon average by 2007. This step would have saved one million barrels of oil per day and slashed carbon dioxide emissions. A vote IN FAVOR of the Boehlert-Markey amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2001.pdf); HR 4, House Roll Call Vote #311, [8/1/01](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2001/roll311.xml)]

**2001: Otter Voted Against Funding For Low-Income Weatherization Assistance.** During House debate of the Fiscal Year 2002 Interior appropriations bill, Representative Bernard Sanders (I-VT) introduced an amendment to increase low income weatherization assistance by $24 million and add $12 million for other energy conservation programs, paid for by a $52 million cut in funding for fossil fuel development. A vote IN FAVOR of the Sanders amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the environment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2001.pdf); HR 2217, House Roll Call Vote #178, [6/21/01](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2001/roll178.xml)]

## Endangered Species

**2017: Otter Supported Ryan Zinke’s Changes To The Sage Grouse Protection Plan That Allowed States Greater Flexibility To Allow Mining And Logging In Prohibited Areas.** “Idaho Gov. Butch Otter said Monday he is ‘encouraged’ by changes to the federal plan to protect the threatened sage grouse that give Western states greater flexibility to allow mining, logging and other economic development where it now is prohibited ‘"This is an appropriate step toward empowering Idaho to proactively manage and conserve sage grouse populations while preserving the customs and culture of the state,’ Otter told the Statesman. ‘However, much remains to be done. My staff and I stand ready to roll up our sleeves and work with the Department of the Interior to bring the federal plans into alignment with Idaho's science-based conservation plan.’ Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Monday announced the strategy for the ground-dwelling bird that has suffered a dramatic population decline across its 11-state range. Zinke insisted that the federal government and the states can work together to protect the sage grouse and its habitat while not slowing economic growth and job creation.” [Idaho Statesman, 8/7/17]

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**2015: Otter Was The First To Sue The Obama Administration Over The Sage Grouse Protection Plan.** “Idaho Gov. Butch Otter (R), a contender to become the next Agriculture secretary, helped lead the charge against a major Obama administration endangered species plan. Otter's state was the first to sue the Obama administration last year over its land-use plans for preserving the habitat of the greater sage grouse. The administration announced that its new plans would prevent the sage grouse from being listed under the Endangered Species Act, which Otter and others had advocated. But Otter said the Obama land-use policies weren't much better. ‘We didn't want an ESA listing, but in many ways these administrative rules are worse,’ Otter said at the time. ‘This complaint is an unfortunate but necessary step to protect the rights of Idaho citizens to participate in public land decisions that will impact their communities, their economy and their lives’” [E&E News, 12/15/16]

**2011: Otter Criticized Federal Management Of Wolves.** “Otter has also been critical of federal management of wolves and of U.S. EPA policies. He said in a 2011 speech, ‘We know what happens when that government-first mindset takes hold. We wind up in court and working with our friends in Congress to stop the federal government from breaking its promises on delisting and restoring state management of wolves that are killing our big game and livestock. We wind up fighting to stop the EPA from imposing unreasonable restrictions on the people of the Silver Valley.’” [E&E News, 12/15/16]

**2005: Otter Sponsored Legislation To Change The Process For Designating Critical Habitat For Endangered Species.** “Idaho Congressmen Mike Simpson and C.L. "Butch" Otter became original cosponsors on Wednesday of California Democrat Dennis Cardoza's legislation to protect property owners and species by improving the critical habitat designation process under the Endangered Species Act. The Critical Habitat Enhancement Act, H.R. 1299, would give the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service more time to designate critical habitat for a listed species so that decisions are based on the best available scientific information. It also would require the Fish and Wildlife Service to consider economic impacts and consult with local entities when designating lands for inclusion in a critical habitat area. […] ‘For decades the ESA - and specifically the critical habitat designation process - has been more of a frustrating exercise in paperwork and lawsuits than a collaborative, realistic way to address issues on the ground,’ Congressman Otter said. ‘This bill is a way to refocus the use of limited resources on the species rather than continuing with wasteful and too often futile preservation and recovery efforts.’” [Rep. Mike Simpson Press Release, 3/16/05]

**2003: Otter Accused “Environmental Extremists” Of “Putting The Welfare Of Wildlife Before People” By Re-Opening Public Comment On The Habitat Of The Canada Lynx.** “Under a federal court order, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is re-opening a public comment period to determine if the Canada lynx, which has a range primarily out west, ranges as far as Maine. […] Rep. C.L. "Butch" Otter, R-Idaho, condemned the court's decision in a weekly column distributed to newspapers throughout Idaho, saying, ‘Environmental extremists are threatening to make life a little more miserable for folks in the West by once again putting the welfare of wildlife before people.’” [States News Service, 3/31/03]

**2000: Otter Wanted To Give States Veto Power Over The Endangered Species Act.** “Otter would like the ESA changed to give states veto power over endangered species issues inside their borders. When an endangered species crosses state borders, the states involved could draw up compacts, he says. The states of Idaho, Oregon and Washington could work out any problem on endangered species together, he says.” [Lewiston Morning Tribune, 5/14/00]

### Key Votes

**2005: Otter Voted To Roll Back Portions Of The Endangered Species Act.** The Threatened and Endangered Species Recover Act, introduced by Richard Pombo (R-CA), would have eliminated all protections for "critical habitat" in the law; exempted EPA's regulation of pesticide from the Endangered Species Act; mandated open-ended payments to developers for complying with the act; allowed political appointees, including the Secretary of Interior, to overrule the scientific decisions made by wildlife experts; and short-circuited Fish and Wildlife Service review of federal agency actions that affect endangered species. A vote AGAINST the bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2005.pdf); HR 3824, House Roll Call Vote #506, [9/29/05](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2005/roll506.xml)]

**2003: Otter Voted To Exempt The Department Of Defense From The Endangered Species Act And Marine Mammal Protection Act.** During consideration of H.R. 1588, the national defense authorization bill, the House Armed Services Committee inserted provisions exempting the military from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). These exemptions eliminated protection for more than 300 federally listed threatened and endangered species living on Defense Department lands and impaired protections for marine mammals by altering one of the MMPA's core provisions, writing loopholes into the permit process, and allowing for broad, categorical exemptions to all of the MMPA's requirements.The rule for debate of the bill prohibited representatives from introducing amendments on the House floor to strike the environmental exemptions. As a result, the vote on the rule became a de facto vote on the bill's environmental merits. A vote AGAINST the rule was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted to adopt the rule. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); H Res 245, House Roll Call Vote #202, [5/21/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll202.xml)]

**2002: Otter Voted To Exempt The Department Of Defense From The Endangered Species Act And The Migratory Bird Treaty Act.** During consideration of H.R. 4546, the defense authorization bill, the House Armed Services Committee inserted provisions exempting the military from the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. These exemptions eliminated protection for more than 300 federally listed threatened and endangered species living on Defense Department lands and allowed the Defense Department to kill migratory birds and destroy their nesting areas in the name of "military readiness activities," without oversight or assessment of biological impacts. The House bill also included a provision to reduce protections for Utah wilderness lands administered by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, allowing the Defense Department to build roads, close public access and deny water rights necessary to protect wildlife. The rule for debate of the bill prohibited representatives from introducing amendments on the House floor to strike the environmental exemptions. As a result, the vote on the rule became a de facto vote on the bill's environmental merits. A vote AGAINST the rule was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted to adopt the rule. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2002.pdf); H Res 415, House Roll Call Vote #136, [5/9/02](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2002/roll136.xml)]

## Mining

### Key Votes

**2001: Otter Voted To Roll Back Environmental Regulations For Hardrock Mining.** In January 2001, the Interior Department issued new regulations on hardrock mining. These regulations established mining-specific environmental and cleanup standards to protect public lands, required mining companies, rather than taxpayers, to foot the bill for cleanups and gave the Bureau of Land Management the right to deny permits for mines that would irreparably damage environmentally sensitive public lands. Representatives Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Steve Horn (R-CA) offered an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2002 House Interior Appropriations bill to block the Interior Department from rolling back the newly issued regulations. A vote IN FAVOR of the Inslee-Horn amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2001.pdf); HR 2217, House Roll Call Vote #182, [6/21/01](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2001/roll182.xml)]

## Offshore Drilling

### Key Votes

**2006: Otter Voted To Allow Drilling As Close As Three Miles To Shore.** Representative Bobby Jindal (R-LA) later introduced H.R. 4761, the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act, which would permit oil and gas drilling within 100 miles and give states the option to allow drilling as close as three to seven miles off their coasts. A vote AGAINST the bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2006.pdf); HR 4761, House Roll Call Vote #356, [6/29/06](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2006/roll356.xml)]

**2006: Otter Voted To End The Moratorium On Coastal Drilling.** Congress created the first offshore oil and gas moratorium in 1982. H.R. 5386, the Interior-Environment Appropriations bill, included language that would have repealed the longstanding congressional moratorium and permitted drilling as close as three miles away from the coastline. Representatives Adam Putnam (R-FL), Lois Capps (D-CA), Jim Davis (D-FL), and Mark Foley (R-FL) offered an amendment to keep the moratorium in place. A vote IN FAVOR of the Putnam-Capps-Davis-Foley amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2006.pdf); HR 5386, House Roll Call Vote #170, [5/18/06](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2006/roll170.xml)]

**2005: Otter Voted To Lift The Offshore Drilling Moratorium For Natural Gas.** Representative John Peterson offered an amendment to the House Interior Appropriations bill that lifted the moratorium on offshore oil and gas drilling for natural gas. A vote AGAINST the Peterson amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2005.pdf); HR 2361, House Roll Call Vote #192, [5/19/05](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2005/roll192.xml)]

**2005: Otter Opposed Local Control Over The Siting Of Liquid Natural Gas Terminals.** Because of risks to human health and the coastal environment, state and local governments have sometimes intervened in debates over the siting of liquefied natural gas terminals. In its original form, H.R. 6, the energy bill, contained a provision that preempted all state authority and left the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) the main arbiter of siting decisions. Representative Michael Castle (R-DE) introduced an amendment to strike the provision and restore state and local authority. A vote IN FAVOR of the Castle amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2005.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #131, [4/21/05](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2005/roll131.xml)]

**2002: Otter Opposed Banning Coastal California Drilling.** During House consideration of H.R. 5093, the Department of Interior appropriations bill for fiscal year 2003, Representative Lois Capps (D-CA) introduced an amendment to prohibit drilling activity in the 36 California offshore oil leases. A vote IN FAVOR of the Capps amendment was as vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2002.pdf); HR 5093, House Roll Call Vote #315, [5/9/02](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2002/roll315.xml)]

**2001: Otter Opposed A Moratorium On New Drilling In The Great Lakes.** During consideration of H.R. 2311, the Energy and Water appropriations bill, Representatives David Bonior (D-MI), Bart Stupak (D-MI), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), and Steven LaTourette (R-OH) introduced an amendment to impose a one-year moratorium on new drilling. Specifically, the amendment would have prohibited the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from spending federal funds to issue new permits for oil or gas drilling beneath any of the Great Lakes, as well as Lake St. Clair, the St. Mary's River, the St. Clair River, the Detroit River, the Niagara River, and the St. Lawrence River from Lake Ontario to the 45th parallel. A vote IN FAVOR of the Bonior amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2001.pdf); HR 2217, House Roll Call Vote #203, [6/28/01](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2001/roll203.xml)]

**2001: Otter Voted To Open Offshore Drilling Leases Off Florida’s Coastline.** During consideration of HR 2217, the Fiscal Year 2002 Interior Appropriations bill, Representatives Jim Davis (D-FL) and Joe Scarborough (R-FL) offered an amendment to delay oil and gas leasing in the Gulf of Mexico off Florida’s coastline. A vote IN FAVOR of the Davis-Scarborough amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2001.pdf); HR 2217, House Roll Call Vote #181, [6/21/01](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2001/roll181.xml)]

# Public Lands

**2018: Otter Said He Would Prefer A “Sharecropping” Arrangement Where The Federal Government Owns Land, But The States Manage It.** “He shared his views with the president's son when he was being courted to be secretary of Agriculture, Otter said. Donald Trump Jr. wondered if he believed federal land should to be shifted to private ownership. Otter said he agreed with that position during the Sagebrush Rebellion in 1976. That was when ranchers in the West objected to a change in the Bureau of Land Management's priorities to include some preservation. ‘I was right there leading the parade,’ he said. ‘I was so angry with what was happening in Idaho that I thought nobody could screw up a job as bad as the Interior Department and Forest Service had in Idaho.’ Now he wants to be a ‘sharecropper’ on federal land. ‘That's where you own the land, and I manage the land for you,’ he said.” [Idaho Statesman, 3/29/18]

* **Otter On State Ownership Of Federal Land: “I Would Rather Be A Sharecropper.”** “Otter said one of the questions he was asked when he was being interviewed was whether he is in favor of ‘selling off’ federally owned forests. Otter said he is not -- he said he used to lean toward this position, but changed his view after he became governor and saw how much fire suppression cost. ‘I said I would rather be a sharecropper,’ he said -- meaning he would rather ‘someone else owns the land and they've got the capital invested.’ Otter said he favors increasing the states' role in forest management and allowing more logging, a position held by many other western conservatives who say this would reduce the number of fires by cutting down on flammable material in the forests. Otter pointed to the large wildfires in the Boise Forest in 2010, which released large amounts of mercury and carbon into the atmosphere. ‘It's an environmental issue as well as a management issue,’ he said.” [Idaho Statesman, 12/16/16]

**2017: Otter Described His Transformation On Public Lands From Thinking Federal Employees Were “The Enemy” To Learning That they “Drink Our Water, Attend Our Churches And Live In Our Neighborhoods.”** “Idaho Gov. Butch Otter has come a long way from his sagebrush rebel days. If you were looking to pick a fight with the federal government over public land management, Otter was ready to join your posse. He acknowledged as much when he talked last fall at the second workshop of the Western Governors' National Forest and Rangeland Management Initiative. ‘I always thought they were the enemy,’ he told a crowd of ranchers, timber company executives, loggers, conservation groups and federal land managers in October. His description of his own transformation shows how, when we engage with people who don't necessarily share our opinion or experiences, we can change for the better. Otter talked about how he had learned that the federal employees ‘who drink our water, attend our churches and live in our neighborhoods’ can be advocates for the state's best interests. ‘When they become part of our neighborhoods, part of our community, they are part of our culture, they are part of our vision,’ Otter said. As a congressman in 2005, Otter co-sponsored a bill to sell off some federal land to help pay the cost of hurricane relief. He backed off after Jerry Brady, his 2006 Democratic gubernatorial opponent, made it a campaign issue. Since then Otter has consistently opposed transferring the 60 percent of Idaho public land managed by the federal government, he said because he's seen the bill for fighting fires.” [Idaho Statesman, 1/12/17]

* **HEADLINE: “Old Sagebrush Rebel Otter Softens His Stance”** [Idaho Statesman, 1/22/16]
* **2016: Otter On Federal Lands: “Ownership In And Of Itself Is Not The Answer.”** “At the Western Governors Association workshop on endangered species that Otter hosted in Boise on Tuesday, Idaho's governor embraced the collaborative process. The best solutions to the complexities of the Endangered Species Act are ‘collaborative discussions,’ Otter told the diverse groups of county officials, consultants, ranchers, environmentalists and industry executives. ‘Did I always feel that way? No, no,’ he said. ‘There were times when I was just beginning to get into the political process, when the Sagebrush Rebellion started during the Carter administration, and there were an awful lot of us that thought, ironically, we ought to be taking over an awful lot more. Really what it comes down to is the input we have. Ownership in and of itself is not the answer. Being part of the management process and being part of the solution and being seriously considered with our ideas is what matters and will continue to matter.’” [Idaho Statesman, 1/22/16]

**2006: Otter Opposed Creating A New Wilderness Area In Central Idaho.** “Gubernatorial candidate and U.S. Rep. C.L. ‘Butch’ Otter says he opposes a central Idaho wilderness bill sponsored by fellow Idaho Republican Rep. Mike Simpson because language releasing some lands from wilderness protection is not strong enough. He said challenges could some day return those lands to a more protected status. ‘The problem is there's nothing to stop these folks from coming back and saying, 'Look, we want to restrict that area or we want more to be wilderness,'’ Otter told The Idaho Statesman at a barbecue to raise money for his campaign. ‘There never seems to be an agreement where you don't have to go back and remind them what was said.’ Otter also said wilderness bills should make land released from protected status similar in size to lands designated as wilderness. ‘It sets a precedent,’ Otter said. ‘Putting in three acres (into wilderness) for every one you release just doesn't seem equal to me.’ The Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act introduced by Simpson designates three new federally protected wilderness areas in the rugged mountains of the Sawtooth and Challis National Forests the Ernest Hemingway-Boulder Wilderness, the White Clouds Wilderness and the Jerry Peak Wilderness.” [Associated Press, 8/4/06]

**2005: Otter Proposed The Sale Of Five Million Acres Of Federal Land To Pay For Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts.** “A proposal to sell 5 million acres of public land in Idaho to help pay for Hurricane Katrina relief and future disasters has the backing of U.S. Rep. C. L. Butch Otter. Jerry Brady, a Democratic candidate for governor, warns the idea will ban the public from Idaho's best open spaces. The bill, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Thomas G. Tancredo, R-Colo., directs the secretary of agriculture to select and sell 15 percent of all U.S. national forests. The secretary of interior gets the same instructions for public lands, such as those held by the Bureau of Land Management. ‘Even as an absentee landlord, the federal government has a responsibility to pay its fair share,’ said Otter in a statement issued by his office. Otter, who is running for governor in 2006, noted Idaho counties ‘routinely are shortchanged’ on Payment in Lieu of Taxes, a federal program to compensate counties for federal lands that aren't subject to taxation. The bill, which he has cosponsored, would eliminate reliance on PILT payments and help local governments by putting more land on property tax rolls, he said.” [Lewiston Morning Tribune, 12/20/05]

* **After Backlash From Idaho Residents And Media, Otter Withdrew His Support For The Land Sale Bill.** “Congressman Butch Otter has pulled his support of a bill that would have sold millions of acres of federal land in Idaho. ‘I was wrong,’ the Republican candidate for governor said in an opinion piece he sent Thursday to The Idaho Statesman. ‘It wasn´t the first time and it won´t be the last.’ […] The bill was never scheduled for a hearing, and didn´t get much attention until Otter´s opponent in the governor´s race brought it up. As late as Dec. 20, Otter was still publicly supporting the proposal, which he now calls one of a series of ‘shots across the bow’ intended more to raise debate than to become law. Even Thursday, he said too much federal government land hurts Idaho counties. ‘The federal government, which controls almost two-thirds of Idaho´s land mass -- forest and rangeland that is exempt from the property taxes that you and I pay -- has a responsibility to carry its own weight,’ Otter wrote. […] Otter said he heard the opposition from Idahoans. In his opinion -- which runs in full on today´s editorial page -- Otter thanks the ‘people who have called and written and stopped me on the street to express their earnest thoughts on the matter.’” [Idaho Statesman, 1/6/06]

**2005: Otter Served As Co-Chair Of An Effort To Raise Private Funds To Purchase Conservation Easements In The St. Joe’s Basin.** “Oscar-winning actress Patty Duke Pearce and U.S. Rep. C.L. ‘Butch’ Otter, R-Idaho, are promoting an effort to raise $2 million in private money to help shield 80,000 acres of forest near northern Idaho's St. Joe River from most development. Pearce and Otter on Thursday were named to co-chair the St. Joe Conservation Initiative. They're trying to raise $400,000 by September, and another $1.55 million in donations by 2007, to buy conservation easements on timber land owned by wood-products company Potlatch Corp. The private money is needed to receive grants from the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy program that easement proponents hope will total about $8 million. The easements, negotiated through the Trust for Public Land conservation group in talks with Potlatch, would allow public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation as well as continued timber harvesting - while keeping the land protected from real-estate development. […] Otter said the key for him in this push is that it preserves Potlatch's access to timber, in the form of selective cutting that bars clearcuts, while ensuring public access for recreation. ‘I am proud to be part of an effort that respects property rights and protects timber jobs, while making sure that the St. Joe Basin's water is clean and 80,000 acres is free of fences for my grandchildren and great-grandchildren to enjoy,’ Otter said.” [Associated Press, 6/3/05]

**2005: Otter Supported Drilling In The Alaska National Wildlife Refuge And Dismissed Hysteria And Misinformation About The Environmental Consequences.** “Idaho Congressmen C.L. ‘Butch’ Otter and Mike Simpson joined the 249-183 House majority on Thursday in once again approving a comprehensive plan for making America more energy independent, efficient and diverse. […] ‘There is no single answer in the short term. We're not going to conserve our way to energy independence and economic security any more than we're going to drill our way there or find the perfect combination of technology and public acceptance,’ said Congressman Otter, a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. "’his bill approaches the problem from a variety of directions. Now we need the political will to follow through. That means getting past the hysteria and misinformation about ANWR, and it means doing more than repeatedly saying 'No.' Our ability to be competitive in the global marketplace and protect our liberties here at home depend on it.’” [Rep. Butch Otter Press Release, 4/21/05]

**2003: Otter Criticized “Environmental Obstructionists” For Blocking Access To Natural Gas Drilling In Protected Areas.** “With natural gas prices poised to go even higher, Republicans eager to appear active in combating the crisis warned today that bureaucratic red-tape in the gas industry was damaging the economy and sending jobs overseas. […] Several members pointed to government limits and a red-tape mess that prevents drilling in federally protected land, even when there are known natural gas reserves. Rep. C.L. ‘Butch’ Otter, R-Idaho, said there was enough known natural gas in those protected areas to serve 100 million Americans for 157 years, but access was being blocked by ‘environmental obstructionists.’” [States News Service, 7/21/03]

**2002: Otter Introduced Legislation To Limit Wilderness Study Area Designations.** “U.S. Rep. C.L. "Butch" Otter introduced legislation last week that seeks to put a deadline on the process of considering public land for wilderness designation. The proposal -- dubbed America's Wilderness Protection Act -- would return wilderness study areas to their previous use 10 years after the bill is enacted, unless some decision is made about their future. Study-area designation would be lifted earlier if Congress grants wilderness status or the land is determined unsuitable for wilderness designation by the secretary of interior, for acreage overseen by the Bureau of Land Management, or the secretary of agriculture, for land under U.S. Forest Service management. The Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 created the wilderness study-area designation. Those laws made no provision for releasing study areas. As a result, the lands have remained in limbo even after actual studies were completed. ‘If an area is truly worthy of the wilderness label, Congress should designate it as such,’ Otter said. ‘However, if Congress cannot support such a designation, agencies should not manage the area as de facto wilderness into perpetuity.’” [Idaho Statesman, 5/6/02]

* **Environmental Groups Said Otter’s Legislation Was A Tool For Timber And Mining Interests To Stall Any Compromise On Wilderness Designations.** “Otter has sponsored and held hearings on legislation that would set a 10-year limit on the study of areas being considered for wilderness protection. After that 10 years, an area would either have to be listed as wilderness or be returned to the pool of land that can be actively managed. Environmental groups have criticized the legislation as a tool for timber, livestock and the mining industry to stall any kind of compromise on wilderness designations. Otter, however, defends his approach as the only effective way to break up the logjam that is preventing effective management of federal lands. ‘Right now, a lot of environmental groups have exactly what they want,’ Otter said Wednesday. ‘Nothing is happening in that area being studied and nothing can happen in that area.’ Under the present rules, an area being studied for possible wilderness protection is protected from development. And the process of determining whether an area will be protected or not can take decades. ‘What else is going to bring people to the table unless you say, 'OK, you have to have this done.'’” [Lewiston Morning Tribune, 8/15/02]

**2002: Otter Introduced Legislation To Block The Federal Government From Buying Land Without Selling Land to Make Up For It.** “Idaho Congressman C.L. ‘Butch’ Otter joined Congressmen John Peterson (R-PA) and others, in introducing H.R. 3962 the, ‘Good Neighbor Act.’ The bill will require the federal government to sell land to make up for land they buy in counties that are more than 50% federally owned by the National Park Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or Fish and Wildlife Service. ‘Many counties in my district are over 50% owned by the federal government and cannot afford to lose any additional tax base,’ Otter said. ‘This bill protects rural counties from a net loss to their tax base by requiring the federal government to sell land of equal value to make up for any land they want to purchase. In some instances, the counties go from receiving four dollars per acre in tax revenue generated from private land, to fourteen cents per acres when the federal government takes it over. These counties are already struggling under the weight of the federal government, this bill prevents them from being weighed down even more.’” [Rep. Butch Otter Press Release, 3/14/02]

* **Otter: “The Federal Government Has A Very Poor Track Record Of Managing Public Lands.”** “’The federal government has serious problems in maintaining the land they already manage,’ Otter said. ‘From gridlock on management issues, to the declining condition of our national parks, to the poor health of our forests, the federal government has a very poor track record of managing public lands. Until they can get a grasp on the problems facing the land under their current jurisdictions, Congress should not make it easy for the agencies to swallow up anymore.’” [Rep. Butch Otter Press Release, 3/14/02]

**2001: Otter Supported Increased Energy Exploration On Federal Lands.** “Idaho Congressman C.L. "Butch" Otter today announced his commitment to developing a comprehensive national energy policy that both protects the environment and helps the United States remain self-reliant. Otter participated in the House Resources Committee's March 7 energy oversight hearing to evaluate how management of public lands impacts U.S. energy supplies. ‘While electricity prices skyrocket in the West our nation sits on mammoth reserves of natural gas, oil, clean-burning coal and hydropower locked up in our federal lands and waters,’ Otter said. "I emphasize, this is an energy crisis in the West -- not just in California. While almost all of the media and legislative attention has focused on California's inability to meet the growing demand of its citizens for electricity, six-hundred thousand people in the area of Idaho that I represent are on the forefront of this growing crisis.’” [Rep. Butch Otter Press Release, 3/7/01]

**1999: Otter Opposed Creating New Roadless Areas In Idaho’s National Forests.** “Idaho's Democratic and Republican 1st District congressional candidates alike are voicing their objections to President Clinton's initiative to protect over 40 million acres of roadless areas in the country's national forests. […] Lt. Gov. Butch Otter said no more roadless areas need protection in Idaho's national forests. ‘If I were king for a day, I would say, 'Not in Idaho, you aren't going to do this in Idaho,' and take them on legally and every way we can.’” [Associated Press, 12/16/99]

**1998: Otter Supported Constitutional Amendments That could Have Led To The Sale Of Idaho’s Public Lands.** “A bipartisan delegation of state officials visited Lewiston Wednesday afternoon urging voters to support two proposed constitutional amendments they say would generate more money for Idaho public schools. But the state treasurer counters that Idaho voters are not being told the truth about the amendments and they actually could result in the selling off of public lands. Lt. Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter headed the statewide blitz that made six stops from Idaho Falls to Coeur d'Alene on behalf of HJR 6 and HJR 8, which will be on the Idaho ballot Tuesday. ‘Both of these are efforts to do something about the ever-increasing problem of getting money for public schools,’ Otter said. ‘If Idahoans don't vote yes on this, they will be asked to vote yes on a tax increase in the near future.’ The two proposed amendments, the delegation said, would give the Idaho State Land Board more flexibility in dealing with revenues from public lands. State Treasurer Lydia Justice Edwards, however, has recently launched a one-woman campaign to defeat the proposed amendments. She claims they open the endowment to unacceptably risky investments that threaten cash for public schools. She also says the land board could sell off all or most of the state's public lands.” [Lewiston Morning Tribune, 10/29/98]

### Key Votes

**2006: Otter Voted To Open The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge To Drilling.** The American-Made Energy and Good Jobs Act directed the Secretary of the Interior to establish, implement, and administer a competitive oil and gas leasing program for the exploration, development, and production of the oil and gas resources on the Coastal Plain of Alaska and repealed the proscription against production or leasing of oil and gas resources from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. A vote AGAINST the bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2006.pdf); HR 5429, House Roll Call Vote #209, [5/25/06](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2006/roll209.xml)]

**2006: Otter Voted To Allow More Logging Roads In The Tongass National Forest.** During consideration of H.R. 5386, the Interior-Environment Appropriations bill, Representatives Steve Chabot (R-OH) and Rob Andrews (D-NJ) introduced an amendment to end taxpayer subsidies for new commercial logging roads in the Tongass National Forest.A vote IN FAVOR of the Chabot-Andrews amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2006.pdf); HR 5386, House Roll Call Vote #168, [5/18/06](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2006/roll168.xml)]

**2006: Otter Voted To Expedite Logging In National Forests.** Representative Greg Walden (R-OR) introduced H.R. 4200, the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act, to expedite logging in national forests. The bill denied protections to roadless areas, old-growth forests, critical wildlife habitat, and other important areas. It also exempted logging projects from the National Environmental Policy Act. In addition, the bill waived the Clean Water Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and any other act that requires consultation prior to project implementation. Finally, H.R. 4200 created incentives that could shift Forest Service efforts away from community protection and forest restoration toward logging. A vote AGAINST the bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2006.pdf); HR 4200, House Roll Call Vote #151, [5/17/06](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2006/roll151.xml)]

**2005: Otter Voted To End A Ban On The Sale Of Public Lands To Mining Companies.** H.R. 4241, the budget reconciliation bill, contained a provision that would have fundamentally rewritten national mining policy by ending a decade-long Congressional ban on the sale of public lands to mining companies. These lands include Bureau of Land Management tracts and certain areas within national parks and forests. Under the new provision, these lands could be sold without public input or environmental review. The lands would be not be required to be used only for mining but could be used for real estate development or other purposes. This provision was dropped during conference negotiations with the Senate. A vote AGAINST the bill was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2005.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #601, [11/18/05](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2005/roll601.xml)]

**2005: Otter Voted to Open The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge To Drilling.** Congressman Ed Markey (D-MA) and Congresswoman Nancy Johnson (R-CT) offered an amendment to the energy bill to strike a provision opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling. A vote IN FAVOR of the Markey-Johnson amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2005.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #122, [4/20/05](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2005/roll122.xml)]

**2004: Otter Voted To Allow Snowmobiles In Yellowstone And Grand Teton National Parks.** During House debate of H.R. 4568, the Interior appropriations bill, Representatives Rush Holt (D-NJ), Christopher Shays (R-CT), Nick J. Rahall (D-WV), and Tim Johnson (R-IL) offered an amendment to uphold a Park Service decision to ban snowmobile use in Yellowstone and neighboring Grand Teton National Park. A vote IN FAVOR of the Holt-Shays-Rahall-Johnson amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2004.pdf); HR 4568, House Roll Call Vote #263, [6/17/04](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/roll263.xml)]

**2004: Otter Voted To Allow The Bush Administration To Move Forward With Weakening Environmental Protections For National Forests.** In 2002, the Bush Administration proposed sweeping new regulatory changes that eliminated virtually all the standards to which the Forest Service could be held accountable. The proposed regulations, undertaken without scientific input and with the full cooperation of the timber industry, weakened safeguards for wildlife and wildlife habitats. They also exempted forest plans from NEPA environmental review and placed strict new limits on the ability of citizens to participate in the development of forest plans, made ecological sustainability of national forests a lower priority, and reduced the roles of science and monitoring in forest planning. During consideration of H.R. 4568, the Interior appropriations bill, Representative Tom Udall (D-NM) an amendment to prevent the administration from finalizing or implementing these new regulations. A vote IN FAVOR of the Udall amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2004.pdf); HR 4568, House Roll Call Vote #254, [6/16/04](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/roll254.xml)]

**2004: Otter Voted To Build More Commercial Logging Roads In The Tongass National Forest.** At 17 million acres, the Tongass National Forest of southeast Alaska is America's largest national forest and the world's largest remaining old-growth temperate rainforest. The forest provides critical habitat for wolves, grizzly bears, wild salmon and bald eagles. Representatives Steve Chabot (R-OH) and Robert Andrews (D-NJ) offered an amendment to H.R. 4568, the Interior appropriations bill, to prohibit the use of federal funds for building commercial logging roads in the Tongass. A vote IN FAVOR of the Chabot-Andrews amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2004.pdf); HR 4568, House Roll Call Vote #253, [6/16/04](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/roll253.xml)]

**2004: Otter Voted To Roll Back NEPA Protections On Federal Lands.** H.R. 4513, introduced by Representative Richard Pombo (R-CA) streamlined licensing and siting for alternative energy projects on federal lands by abrogating NEPA provisions that require federal agencies to identify and evaluate alternatives to the projects under review. The bill also prevented the general public and local and state governments from submitting comments on alternatives to proposed projects and allowed only 20 days to review and comment on the projects themselves (as opposed to the 90 days required under NEPA). Although conservationists strongly support enhanced use of solar, wind, and other renewable technologies, they felt that such projects should be given the same levels of scrutiny under NEPA as non-renewable projects, and the public should have the same opportunity to review and comment on them. In addition, the legislation's broad definition of ‘renewable energy project’ could have curtailed scrutiny of projects with potentially high environmental costs, such as hydroelectric dams and waste incineration plants.[[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2004.pdf); HR 4513, House Roll Call Vote #242, [6/15/04](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/roll242.xml)]

**2003: Otter Voted To Roll Back Protections For National Forests.**  In 2002, the Bush administration proposed sweeping new regulatory changes to the National Forest Management Act that would fundamentally impair the future of America's national forests. The proposed regulations eliminated the population viability rule, weakening safeguards for wildlife and wildlife habitats. Their proposed changes would also exempt forest plans from NEPA environmental review and placed strict new limits on the ability of citizens to participate in the development of forest plans. Finally, the Bush administration proposed to make ecological sustainability of national forests a lower priority, and reduce the roles of science and monitoring in forest planning. During consideration of H.R. 2691, the Interior appropriations bill, Representative Tom Udall (D-NM) offered an amendment to prevent the administration from finalizing or implementing these new regulations. A vote IN FAVOR of the Udall amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 2691, House Roll Call Vote #386, [7/17/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll386.xml)]

**2003: Otter Voted To Allow Snowmobiles In Yellowstone And Grand Teton National Parks.** During House debate on the 2004 Interior appropriations bill, H.R. 2691, Representatives Rush Holt (D-NJ), Christopher Shays (R-CT), Nick Rahall (D-WV) and Tim Johnson (R-IL) offered an amendment to uphold a ban on snowmobile use in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and promote access to the park via multi-passenger snowcoaches. A vote IN FAVOR of the Holt-Shays-Rahall-Johnson amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 2691, House Roll Call Vote #385, [7/17/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll385.xml)]

**2003: Otter Voted Against Protecting Roadless Areas In National Forests.** In early January 2001, the Clinton administration issued the roadless area conservation rule to protect some 58.5 million acres of roadless national forest lands from roadbuilding and most forms of logging. In 2003, the Bush administration unveiled a draft proposal to drop roadless protections for the Tongass National Forest and Chugach National Forest in Alaska and to allow governors to petition the administration for similar exemptions for national forests in their own states. Representative Jay Inslee (D-WA) offered an amendment to H.R. 2691, the 2004 Interior appropriations bill, to prohibit the administration from expending any federal funds to make changes to the roadless rule as it was originally published. A vote IN FAVOR of the Inslee amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 2691, House Roll Call Vote #384, [7/17/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll384.xml)]

**2003: Otter Voted To Allow The Killing Of Bison In And Around Yellowstone.** During consideration of H.R. 2691, the 2004 Interior appropriations bill, Representative Nick Rahall (D-WV) offered an amendment to prohibit the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service from using federal funds to kill bison in and around Yellowstone. A vote IN FAVOR of the Rahall amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 2691, House Roll Call Vote #383, [7/17/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll383.xml)]

**2003: Otter Voted To Allow Environmentally Damaging Farming In The Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuges.** Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Mike Thompson (D-CA), and Chris Shays (R-CT) offered an amendment to H.R. 2691, the 2004 Interior appropriations bill, that would have prohibited the Fish and Wildlife Service from issuing new commercial agriculture leases Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge for crops that have severe environmental impacts. At the same time, it permitted the growing of crops that provide some benefits to wildlife, in a manner consistent with farming practices on other national wildlife refuges. A vote IN FAVOR of the Blumenauer-Thompson-Shays amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 2691, House Roll Call Vote #380, [7/17/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll380.xml)]

**2003: Otter Voted In Favor Of Drilling In The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.** Representatives Ed Markey (D-MA) and Nancy Johnson (R-CT) offered an amendment to the energy bill to strike a provision opening the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling. A vote IN FAVOR of the Markey-Johnson amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #135, [4/10/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll135.xml)]

**2003: Otter Voted For A Deceptive Republican Amendment That Purported To Limit Environmental Damage From Drilling In The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.**  Representative Heather Wilson (R-NM) sponsored an amendment to the energy bill that purported to limit oil and gas development of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to 2,000 acres, but would have allowed the 2,000 acres to be scattered across the coastal plain and would have excluded gravel mines, permanent roads, and even pipelines from the total tally. A vote AGAINST the Wilson amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 6, House Roll Call Vote #134, [4/10/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll134.xml)]

**2002: Otter Voted To Allow Environmentally Damaging Farming In The Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuges.** Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Mike Thompson (D-CA) offered an amendment to H.R. 5093, the Interior appropriations bill that prohibited the Fish and Wildlife Service from issuing new commercial agriculture leases in the Klamath Basin wildlife refuges for crops that have severe environmental impacts. The amendment still permitted leases that were more consistent with farming practices on other national wildlife refuges.A vote in FAVOR of the Blumenauer-Thompson amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2002.pdf); HR 5093, House Roll Call Vote #315, [5/9/02](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2002/roll315.xml)]

**2001: Otter Voted In Favor Of Drilling In The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.** Representatives Ed Markey (D-MA) and Nancy Johnson (R-CT) offered an amendment to the 2001 energy bill that would have struck a provision opening Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling and maintained an existing prohibition on oil exploration in the refuge. A vote IN FAVOR of the Markey-Johnson amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2001.pdf); HR 4, House Roll Call Vote #317, [8/1/01](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2001/roll317.xml)]

**2001: Otter Voted Against A Deceptive Republican Amendment That Purported To Limit Environmental Damage From Drilling In The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.** During debate over a measure in the 2001 energy bill opening Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration, Representatives John Sununu (R-NH) and Heather Wilson (R-NM) sponsored an amendment that purported to limit the environmental damage from oil development on the coastal plain. Their 2,000-acre "limitation" would have allowed the 2,000 acres to be scattered across the coastal plain and it exempted gravel mines, permanent roads, and even pipelines from the limits. Because the nature of drilling activities in the Arctic Refuge would be no different with or without the Sununu-Wilson amendment, environmentalists strongly opposed this deceptive amendment. A vote AGAINST the Sununu-Wilson amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2001.pdf); HR 4, House Roll Call Vote #316, [8/1/01](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2001/roll316.xml)]

**2001: Otter Voted To Allow Drilling In National Monuments.** During consideration of HR 2217, the Fiscal Year 2002 Interior Appropriations bill, Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) introduced an amendment to prohibit the Secretary of Interior from issuing any oil, gas, coal or geothermal leases in any national monument. A vote IN FAVOR of the Rahall amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2001.pdf); HR 2217, House Roll Call Vote #180, [6/21/01](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2001/roll180.xml)]

## Wildfires

**2018: Otter Supported Giving Loggers And Other People Who Work In Forests The Authority To Put Out Fires When They Start.** “Otter called the recent revision to the way federal firefighting money is allocated a historic sign of the federal government's growing understanding of the needs of the nation's public lands. ‘We finally separated the emergency and urgency of firefighting from having to steal from the management, the tendering and the taking care of the forest,’ he said. The federal government's commitment to firefighting, he said, will be helped by local citizens' efforts he has backed. The issue surfaced in 2007 when a fire Otter said could have been stopped at about 5,000 acres consumed 700,000 acres of habitat for bull trout, pygmy rabbits and slickspot peppergrass. A crew had arrived with equipment to build a fire break, he said, but a BLM employee wouldn't allow it to be unloaded because a safety officer wasn't available. After that, Otter convinced the legislature to approve money for local fire districts that were trained with help from the BLM. That approach could be repeated in Idaho's forests, he said, by giving loggers and others who work in the forest the authority to put out blazes when they start and to remain to help. ‘You know the land. You know where the hazards are,’ he said.” [Idaho Statesman, 3/29/18]

**2002: Otter Blamed Mismanagement Of National Forests, “Aggressive Fire Suppression Efforts And Environmental Obstructionists” For Wildfires.** “Healthy, sustainable forests are at the heart of a resolution cosponsored by Congressman C.L. "Butch" Otter that was approved by the House Resources Committee and sent to the full House on Wednesday The bill (H. Con. Res. 352) expresses the intent of Congress that all federal land management agencies fully implement the Western Governors' Association's ‘Collaborative 10-year Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment.’ […] ‘Enormous, catastrophic wildfires are a scourge on the landscape, our economy and too often our very lives. They're all the more unfortunate because in many cases they are unnecessary,’ Otter said. ‘For too long mismanagement has allowed our national forests to become overgrown, insect-infested, diseased and congested with dead and dying trees - trees that might have been a valuable resource for the timber mills that once provided jobs in our rural communities. Instead, neglect, aggressive fire suppression efforts and environmental obstructionists have combined to create incendiary conditions that idle mills, stifle rural economies and put the forests themselves at risk.’” [Rep. Butch Otter Press Release, 5/22/02]

**2000: Otter Blamed Federal Forest Management For Idaho’s Wildfires.** “Otter blamed federal land management policies for this year's wildfires, saying it was ‘no accident’ that federal forest lands burned while most state lands in Idaho were spared. ‘The BLM ground burned because we weren't grazing it and we let the fuel build up,’ he said.” [Spokane Spokesman Review, 10/4/00]

### Key Votes

**2003: Otter Voted For The Bush Administration’s “Healthy Forests Restoration Act,” Which Promoted Logging And Rolled Back Environmental Protections.** In response to several disastrous fire seasons, the Bush administration proposed the “Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.” Environmentalists criticized the bill on a number of fronts, arguing that it would promote the logging of large fire-resistant trees in the backcountry while doing little to protect the areas where people live. In addition, it eliminated the requirement in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that agencies consider a "full range of alternatives" for projects with environmental impacts on up to 20 million acres of federal public land. It further undermined NEPA by creating a new category of projects to be excluded from NEPA review that could effectively exempt up to a quarter-million acres of federal forests. A vote AGAINST HR 1904 was a vote in favor of the environment. Otter voted for the bill. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 1904, House Roll Call Vote #200, [5/20/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll200.xml)]

* **2003: Otter Voted Against Focusing On Removing Hazardous Brush In Areas Near Communities.** Representatives George Miller (D-CA), Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Nick Rahall (D-WV), and John Conyers (D-MI) offered a substitute amendment to H.R. 1904 that sought to protect homes and communities from the threat of wildfire without undermining public participation and environmental laws. The substitute allocated 85 percent of the authorized funds for projects within a half mile of at-risk communities. While the amendment would have permitted NEPA exemptions within these half-mile community zones, it would have reinstated NEPA restrictions for any projects outside these zones. Moreover, the substitute amendment would have prohibited forest thinning projects in roadless areas of national forests. A vote IN FAVOR of the Miller-DeFazio-Rahall-Conyers amendment was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted against the amendment. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2003.pdf); HR 1904, House Roll Call Vote #198, [5/20/03](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll198.xml)]

## Yucca Mountain

### Key Votes

**2002: Otter Voted To Build A Nuclear Waste Repository At Yucca Mountain In Nevada.** The Yucca Mountain Repository Site Approval Act overrode a veto by the state of Nevada and authorized construction of a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain. A vote AGAINST the resolution was a vote in support of the environment. Otter voted for the resolution. [[League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](http://scorecard.lcv.org/sites/scorecard.lcv.org/files/LCV_Scorecard_2002.pdf); H J Res 87, House Roll Call Vote #133, [5/8/02](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2002/roll133.xml)]

## Campaign Finance

**2004: Otter Attended A Fundraising Weekend At An Arizona Resort With Mining And Energy Executives.** “A group of Western House Republicans, including Idaho Rep. Butch Otter, will meet at a plush Arizona resort this week to raise money from coal, mining and energy companies and listen to what they want from Congress this year. On Wednesday, executives and lobbyists from companies like Arch Coal Inc., AngloGold North America and Kennecott Energy will pay $ 1,500 a piece to play golf and have dinner with Otter and 10 other Western Republican House members at the Arizona Biltmore Resort in Phoenix. The lawmakers belong to a new campaign fund-raising committee, called the Western GOP Majority Committee. The committee was formed in November and is sponsoring Wednesday's events. […] A spokesman for Otter, Mark Warbis, said his boss is going because it's a good opportunity to get input from Western business leaders. As a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Otter will be deeply involved in rewriting the Clean Air Act. ‘They'll discuss important issues for the First District of Idaho, such as energy issues and general issues of common concern throughout the West,’ Warbis said.” [Gannett, 1/7/04]

**Otter Received $332,817 From The Forestry Industry.** During his Congressional career, the forestry and forest products industry was Otter’s top contributor. Otter received $97,281 from the forestry and forest products industry from 1999-2006. As a state officeholder, Otter has received $235,536 from the industry. [Center for Responsive Politics, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/industries?cid=N00009637&cycle=CAREER&type=I); Follow the Money, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.followthemoney.org/entity-details?eid=6623114)]

**Otter Received $255,165 From Electric Utilities.** Otter received $92,147 in contributions from electric utilities from 1999-2006 as a Congressional candidate. As a state officeholder Otter received $163,018 from the industry. [Center for Responsive Politics, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/industries?cid=N00009637&cycle=CAREER&type=I); Follow the Money, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.followthemoney.org/entity-details?eid=6623114)]

**Otter Received $147,159 From The Livestock Industry.** Otter received $60,500 from livestock interests from 1999-2006 as a congressional candidate. As a state officeholder, Otter has received $86,659 from the industry. [Center for Responsive Politics, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/industries?cid=N00009637&cycle=CAREER&type=I); Follow the Money, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.followthemoney.org/entity-details?eid=6623114)]

**Otter Received $196,812 From The Oil And Gas Industry.** Otter received $57,419 from oil and gas interests from 1999-2006 as a congressional candidate. As a state officeholder, Otter has received $139,393from the industry. [Center for Responsive Politics, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/industries?cid=N00009637&cycle=CAREER&type=I); Follow the Money, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.followthemoney.org/entity-details?eid=6623114)]

**Otter Received $135,405 From The Mining Industry.** Otter received $48,585 from the mining industry from 1999-2006 as a congressional candidate. As a state office holder, Otter has received $89,920 from the industry. [Center for Responsive Politics, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/industries?cid=N00009637&cycle=CAREER&type=I); Follow the Money, [accessed 12/20/18](https://www.followthemoney.org/entity-details?eid=6623114)]