

United States Senate

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ALLARD & UDALL INTRODUCE ROCKY FLATS WILDLIFE REFUGE BILL

*'From Weapons To Wildlife,' Legislation Will Preserve Area From Development
Following Cleanup And Closure*

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) and Colorado Congressman Mark Udall (D-CO) today introduced The Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge Act of 2001, bipartisan legislation which would turn the former nuclear weapons production facility into a national wildlife refuge once the site is cleaned up and closed. The Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments, Colorado Governor Bill Owens and Colorado Attorney General Ken Salazar support the bill, and U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, and U.S. Reps. Diana DeGette, Joel Hefley, Bob Schaffer and Tom Tancredo are cosponsors.

“Today, we begin a new chapter in the history of Rocky Flats,” Allard said in a floor speech before the U.S. Senate. “This legislation will transform Rocky Flats from being an active nuclear weapons plant into an active refuge for wildlife and wild flowers in less than two decades. An accomplishment no one thought possible. It will ensure our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy the wildlife and open space that currently exists at Rocky Flats.”

“This bill is the product of months of work with local officials, citizens and other stakeholders. We are in effect turning weapons into wildlife. This bill would protect one of the last remaining open space opportunities along the Front Range, and at the same time, keep us on track for cleanup and closure of Rocky Flats,” said Udall.

The legislation would convert Rocky Flats into a national wildlife refuge only after the site has been cleaned up and closed. The bill maintains federal ownership of the property, requires the Department of Energy (DOE) to continue cleaning up the site, directs that the refuge designation cannot be used to affect cleanup and will not reduce the level of funds allocated for clean up work at Rocky Flats.

“Our primary goal remains and will continue to remain the safe cleanup and closure of Rocky Flats,” added Allard. “Nothing in this bill affects the on-going cleanup at Rocky Flats.”

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“By establishing the site as a wildlife refuge, we are ensuring a potentially higher level of cleanup than if the site were to be left as simple open space or even commercially developed. We believe that our bill establishes a thorough and responsible approach to the cleanup of the site,” said Udall. “I look forward to working in Congress with the rest of the delegation to pass this legislation this session.”

The legislation was put together by Allard and Udall over the past year in consultation with local elected officials, federal and state agencies, environmental groups and community leaders. The Senate bill, S. 425, will be assigned to the Senate Armed Services Committee, and the House bill, whose number is yet to be determined, will be assigned to the House Resources Committee.

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