

Right Whale Condemned to Extinction in Senate Omnibus

Unprecedented Poison-Pill Rider Lets U.S. Lobster Fishery Drive Whale Extinct

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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*With no process or accountability, **Sen. Chuck Schumer** and Appropriations Chair **Patrick Leahy** inserted an unprecedented right whale policy rider into the [omnibus funding budget](#) released today. Schumer's measure gives the U.S. lobster fishery six years to delay necessary actions to prevent fishing gear from entangling and killing critically endangered [North Atlantic right whales](#).*

With a declining population of 340 individuals and 70 breeding females, the North Atlantic right whale will almost certainly be on an irreversible extinction trajectory if U.S. lobster fisheries are allowed to avoid key conservation measures.

"Schumer and Leahy are extinction Democrats who just heartlessly put special interests above our nation's beautiful natural heritage," said Brett Hartl, government affairs director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "Right whales have migrated along New York's coastline for thousands of years, but Sen. Schumer's action will make this generation the last to witness these remarkable creatures. What a horrific legacy to leave to one's grandchildren."

The FY2023 omnibus provides some additional funding to the Environmental Protection Agency, but the funding remains a cut in real dollars after accounting for inflation. It still remains insufficient to address the decade of flat EPA funding and four years of staff attrition during the Trump administration.

Similarly, the Department of the Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received additional funding compared to FY2022, but these amounts remain well short of what's needed to address the extinction crisis.

“Sacrificing a great whale to extinction in exchange for funding the government is immoral. Doing so just to give Sen. Schumer another political chit in his pocket is simply pathetic,” said Hartl. “A hundred years from now, no one will remember or care about the trivial victories Democrats will try to claim in this legislation, but they’ll mourn the loss of the right whale.”

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Featured image: North Atlantic right whale (Eubalaena glacialis). Credit: NOAA.

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