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The Advocate (Baton Rouge, LA.)

February 7, 2002, Thursday METRO EDITION

SECTION: News; Pg. 11-A

LENGTH: 360 words

HEADLINE: Landrieu gets waffles in refuge flap

BYLINE: MIKE DUNNE

BODY:

Environmentalists presented Sen. Mary Landrieu's Baton Rouge office with waffles Tuesday in an effort to get her to back off supporting oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

During a brief protest outside Landrieu's Florida Street office Tuesday, environmentalists said they thought Landrieu should not support drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

"She tells us she is an environmentalist" but "she does not always vote that way," said Anne Rolfes of the Louisiana **Bucket Brigade**. **The bucket brigade** is a network of groups using homemade **air**-sampling devices in an effort to get regulatory agencies to conduct pollution investigations.

Aaron Viles of the U.S. Public Interest Research Group said environmental groups feel Landrieu is "waffling" on the arctic refuge drilling issue.

"Opening the refuge wouldn't make a dent in our importation of foreign oil, but it would despoil one of our last truly wild areas in the U.S. Increasing our fuel efficiency would do far more to decrease our need for imported oil, as well as have consumers money," Viles said.

T. Bradley Keith, Landrieu's state director, said Landrieu "is not waffling. I think the group (of environmentalists) doesn't like her answer.

"She supports increasing domestic production. It's in the best interest of the state and the nation, and that includes drilling in the refuge." The oil industry promises it can drill safely in the refuge, home to a large caribou herd, Keith said.

Landrieu does not believe the nation's reliance on foreign oil can be solved by "drilling your way out or conserving your way out. It is going to have to be a comprehensive approach," Keith said.

The environmental groups also want Landrieu to support more stringent automobile mileage standards and support more renewable energy resources.

Maura Wood of the Sierra Club said, "Louisianans need a balanced policy that promotes energy efficiency, use of clean renewable energy like wind and solar power and responsible production."

Keith said Landrieu supports greater efficiency and renewable sources of energy, but she is waiting to see specific legislation.

LOAD-DATE: February 7, 2002