

KTUU Channel 2 News

Young introduces bill to delist polar bear

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ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) - U.S. Rep. Don Young has introduced a bill to remove polar bears from the threatened species list.

The 19-term representative, facing a Republican primary challenge in August, claims polar bear populations are thriving. He says the listing is based on predicted future sea ice loss and that it threatens the economic health of hardworking Americans.

Polar bears use sea ice to hunt ringed seals and other prey.

Former Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, who served under President George W. Bush, declared polar bears threatened in 2008, eight months after summer sea ice levels melted to their lowest recorded level.

Most climate modelers predict continued sea ice loss, possibly with an Arctic Ocean that is ice free during summer months by 2030 or sooner.