

## **Front leasing ban earns unanimous support from Montana press**

**Here are excerpts from editorials, published in December 2006, hailing Congress' approval of a ban on new oil and gas leasing on Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. This measure is crucial to the success of ongoing efforts to retire the Front's old leases, which cover some 80,000 acres of the Badger-Two Medicine. See [www.savethefront.org](http://www.savethefront.org) for more information.**

### **Missoulian: Front protection gets needed boost**

Congress has not saved the Rocky Mountain Front, contrary to the cheerful banter about legislative action last week. What Congress actually did with a helpful provision tacked onto a tax bill was ensure that the federal bureaucracy won't create an impediment to the broad-based, citizen-initiated efforts to protect the wild, stunningly beautiful, wildlife-rich and environmentally sensitive country lying roughly between Highways 200 and 2, where the Rocky Mountains tumble out onto the Plains.

It's Montanans who are saving the Front. They've got miles to go before they rest, but the effort is gaining momentum. Members of Montana's congressional delegation did something important last week, and they deserve praise....

### **Great Falls Tribune: Permanent Front drilling ban worth celebrating**

We've long held that keeping Montana's most special places — of which the Rocky Mountain Front is the crown jewel — special is a long-term economic benefit, to the region and to the state. One has only to look at the state's burgeoning tourism and recreation industries — and at the reasons visitors give for choosing Montana — to understand the importance of keeping our attractions, well, attractive. According to the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana, nonresident visitors to Montana topped 10 million for the first time in 2005, contributing \$2.7 billion to the state's economy. (Great Falls Tribune)

### **Daily Inter Lake: Front finally comes to the fore**

The Front is home to 290 species of wildlife, including the country's second-largest elk herd and its largest population of bighorn sheep. It is the only place in the lower 48 states where grizzly bears still range between the mountains and the plains. A case can easily be made that the long-term economic value of an untainted resource like the Front, with its drawing power among hunters and anglers alone, will outstrip the benefit of potential gas extraction in any case.

### **Billings Gazette: Preserving Montana's Rocky Mountain Front**

A land of incomparable beauty teeming with wildlife and outdoor recreational value, the Front has inspired its friends to protect it. Sen. Max Baucus, a longtime proponent of conserving the Front, added the protection language to the tax legislation last week.

...

Finally, Rocky Mountain Front protection that has been in temporary rules for a decade will be written into law permanently, thanks to Baucus and the perseverance of Montana ranchers, anglers, hunters, outfitters and other conservationists.

### **The Helena Independent Record: A big victory for the Front**

The Rocky Mountain Front rises from the plains for more than 100 miles. Its grandeur is only matched by its importance as one of the last large pristine habitats for wildlife in the country. We congratulate everyone involved in making sure it remains that way for future generations to appreciate in their turn.