

# Norway Expands Arctic Border Drilling

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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STOCKHOLM — Norway's Parliament has opened up a new area on the fringe of the Arctic Ocean to offshore oil drilling despite protests from opponents who fear catastrophic oil spills in the remote and icy region.

Most of the Norwegian sector of the Barents Sea, which the Nordic country shares with Russia, is already open to petroleum activities.

But environmentalists and some opposition lawmakers say the risk to Arctic sea ice is higher in a Switzerland-sized area straddling the Russian maritime border and wanted to make parts of it off limits to oil and gas drilling.

Parliament sided with the government in a vote late Wednesday and opened the entire area to drilling, with the caveat that no activity can take place within 31 miles (50 kilometers) of the ice edge.

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