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Chairman Hastings: Obama Administration's New Federal Forest Regulations Will Cost Jobs, Hurt Forest Health

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) today released the following statement regarding the U.S. Forest Service's new forest planning rule that will determine how to manage 155 national forests and 20 grasslands:

"Our national forests are a vital source of economic activity that support American jobs and recreation for local communities and the public. Without proper management, forests are vulnerable to insect and disease infestations, unnatural overgrowth and catastrophic wildfires. Protecting multiple-use and public access to the public's lands is essential to ensure that our forests stay healthy, species are protected and local communities thrive.

"When the proposed regulation was initially released last February, I joined 58 other Representatives in sending a [letter](#) to Secretary Tom Vilsack raising concerns about its de-emphasis of active forest management and emphasis on climate change and ecosystem-based management. Much of these concerns about jobs apparently fell on deaf ears. These new Obama regulations introduce excessive layers of bureaucracy that will cost jobs, hinder proper forest management, increase litigation and add burdensome costs for Americans.

"National forests need to be managed for the benefit of all land users. This cannot be done under a planning process that increases costly, burdensome regulations and undermines the multiple-use benefits of this abundant resource. Within the past year, the Forest Service has proposed closing more recreational roads, imposed restrictions on ski areas, and recommended closing whole areas of wilderness.

"If implemented, this new Obama regulation will cost jobs and allow for further deterioration of our forests' health."

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