

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, February 18, 2010

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Hastings, Bishop Send Letter to President Over Potential Plans to Lock-Up Millions of Acres of Western Land

Internal Document Reveals Administration Looking to Designate over a Dozen New National Monuments in the West

WASHINGTON, D.C. –A recently obtained [internal document](#) from the U.S. Department of the Interior shows the Obama Administration is covertly considering designating up to 17 new National Monuments under the Antiquities Act. In addition, it shows that the Administration is also targeting thousands of acres of private land for potential acquisition by the federal government.

The proposed designations and acquisitions would lock-up at least 13 million acres of land in 11 Western states, cost hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars and be done without Congressional approval. It would also have huge ramifications on our nation's energy, restricting access to immense oil, gas, and mineral deposits, as well as blocking pipelines and transmission corridors.

In response, House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) and National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee Ranking Member Rob Bishop (UT-01) sent a [letter](#) today to President Obama expressing strong opposition to any unilateral action by the Administration to take vast amounts of land without public input.

This internal document comes on the heels of a recent [New York Times article](#) detailing how "President Obama and his team are preparing an array of actions using his executive power to advance energy, environmental, fiscal and other domestic policy priorities."

"This document exposes the hidden maneuvering of the Obama Administration to potentially lock-up tremendous amounts of public and private land without public knowledge or input. This is a gross violation of the promise of transparency and open, public decision-making," said Hastings. "The only thing this Administration isn't trying to hide is its unwavering commitment to expanding government every chance it gets. These designations would jeopardize job creation, energy production, recreational opportunities and tax revenue for local governments. While the President may be frustrated with his inability to pass his agenda through a Democrat-controlled Congress, he should not try to score political victories through secretly-plotted unilateral executive declarations that may please some special interest groups but will harm the livelihoods of countless American families and communities

across the country.”

*“The Antiquities Act has long been misused and abused beyond its original intent. If Western members seem worried it is because we have been burned by Presidential designations in the past. The designation process should be submitted to an open and transparent process,” **said Bishop.** “If such designations were to be implemented, ranching, energy production, recreation and future tax revenue for local communities could be significantly harmed. In light of such significant implications, stakeholders, local officials and community residents deserve the opportunity to provide input and voice their opinions. Anything short of that would be completely irresponsible.”*

In the [letter](#), Hastings and Bishop ask that the public and communities from impacted areas be given ample opportunity to be heard before any restrictive designations are acted upon. They also call on the President to meet four criteria before designating new National Monuments:

1. Any designations must be very constrained in size and solely limited to contiguous lands already owned by the federal government.
2. Any designations should be limited to sites that clearly “contain historic, landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures and other objects of historic or scientific interest.” This is not to be used as a backdoor way to lock up lands for the general purposes of conservation.
3. Private property should be excluded from any Monument designations, avoiding the designation of inholdings.
4. Designations should be limited to areas that face clearly-articulated, imminent threats.

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