



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Chairman Hastings Prepares to Issue Subpoena on White Bluffs Bladderpod Listing Decision

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, at a House Natural Resources Full Committee oversight hearing, Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) pressed U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) Service Director Dan Ashe on the Department’s non-compliance with the Committee’s request for documents regarding the process and science surrounding the FWS’ decision to list the White Bluffs bladderpod as a threatened species. A [letter](#) was sent to the FWS on March 7th seeking specific documents and information to be provided by March 21st. Due to a complete lack of response to his request, Chairman Hastings announced that he is prepared to issue a subpoena for this information if the Department does not comply by April 2nd.

“Committee staff confirmed that the letter was received, but the deadline has passed and we have not yet received any response and none of the information. I would have expected the information by now, given that it relates to a closed rulemaking process and is seeking information about the science used to make the decision. We’re not seeking state secrets here. As the hearing today demonstrated, the Department as a whole does not seem to be taking the Committee’s voluntary requests very seriously. If we do not receive a response and the requested information about the bladderpod listing, I am prepared to subpoena it,” **said Chairman Hastings.**

Background

Amidst serious unanswered questions about the evidence it used, on December 19, 2013 the FWS announced the final listing of the White Bluffs bladderpod in Washington state as a threatened species under the ESA. This was part of the 2011 closed-door mega-settlement between the FWS and the Center for Biological Diversity, which established arbitrary deadlines for literally hundreds of listing decisions, including the bladderpod. The FWS moved forward with the listing despite the fact that contradictory scientific DNA evidence showed a 100 percent match with bladderpod plants found abundantly in multiple states. This raised several specific concerns with the listing decision, including the FWS’ basis for classifying the White Bluffs bladderpod as a separate subspecies, the FWS’ questionable and inadequate process for notifying affected local landowners and citizens of the listing proposal, and the FWS’ peer review of DNA data contradicting the listing.

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