

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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Hastings Statement on Interior Department's new Wilderness Policy

Natural Resources Committee will fully review Secretary's order next Congress

WASHINGTON D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman-elect Doc Hastings (WA-04) released the following statement regarding Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar's Secretarial Order to allow the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to designate areas as "Wild Lands" – essentially giving the Administration the ability establish de facto Wilderness areas without Congressional approval:

"The Administration clearly knows that the law only allows Congress to designate Wilderness areas, though somehow they hope giving it a different label of 'Wild Lands' will pass legal muster. This new policy will have significant ramifications on our economy, jobs, recreational opportunities and American energy production.

"There are ways to protect our lands without designating them as de facto Wilderness areas. Designating an area as wilderness imposes the most restrictive land use policies that can be taken. It places severe limitations on public access, prohibits motorized and mechanized recreation and severely restricts job-creating and energy producing activities.

"This backdoor approach is intended to circumvent both the people who will be directly affected and Congress. I have to question why this announcement is being made only after Congress adjourned for the year. The Natural Resources Committee will fully review this decision next year and its impact on our nation's economic competitiveness and ability to keep and create jobs."

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