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NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN DOC HASTINGS

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CEQ Chair Dodges Questions on Obama Admin Plan to Zone the Oceans

Chairman Hastings Sends Follow-up Letter to Push for Additional Information

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Yesterday, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs held an [oversight hearing](#) examining the spending priorities outlined in the President’s FY2014 budget requests for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

At the hearing, Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) and Members of the Committee pressed CEQ Chair Nancy Sutley to be more responsive and timely in providing information and documents to the Committee. Over the past two years, the Committee has repeatedly attempted to obtain information on the development, legal authority, regulatory burdens, staffing, and funding sources of this policy. These requests have been largely ignored, and yesterday’s hearing did not provide sufficient answers to these important questions. For example, after being pressed to name who from CEQ or other agencies was involved in the development and implementation of the plan, Ms. Sutley was not able to specify one person or staff member who has contributed to this effort.

In response, Chairman Hastings today sent a letter renewing his requests for information on the various activities, costs, impacts, and burdens associated with implementation of the National Ocean Policy and asking a number of follow up questions from yesterday’s budget oversight hearing. [Click here to read the letter.](#)

“Over the past two years, the Obama Administration has repeatedly limited public transparency and frustrated attempts to obtain information about the cost, legal authority, activities, and staffing involved with developing and implementing regional ocean zoning plans and other parts of the National Ocean Policy,” said Chairman Hastings. “Ms. Sutley’s testimony before the Subcommittee did little to provide clarity or allay concerns about the funding sources, regulatory impact, mandatory nature, and role of States, local governments, Tribes, and interested groups in implementing the National Ocean Policy. This is unacceptable, especially now that the final plan has been released.”

Background

On July 19th, 2010, President Obama signed Executive Order 13547 to adopt the final

recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force to implement a new National Ocean Policy, which includes a mandatory Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning initiative to “zone” the oceans. In this unilateral action, he established a top-down, Washington, D.C.–based approval process that will hinder rather than promote ocean and inland activities and cost American jobs. The final implementation plan – [released earlier this week](#) - raises more questions than answers and provides even less information on what the Obama Administration will impose under the guise of a National Ocean Policy and the impending regional management plans.

Due to concerns about the impact of the National Ocean Policy on economic and recreational activities in ocean, coastal, and inland environments, the House of Representatives in both the 112th and 113th Congresses passed amendments by bipartisan votes to halt funding for President Obama’s National Ocean Policy. The Natural Resources Committee has held multiple hearings and sent a series of letters to the National Ocean Council to conduct oversight and get answers to the many questions surrounding this policy.

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