

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN DOC HASTINGS

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## Subpoena Directed to Interior Dept. for Documents on Report Recommending Six-Month Gulf Drilling Moratorium

Chairman Hastings: *"President Obama pledged unprecedented transparency and it's regrettable that a Congressional subpoena is necessary"*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) today issued the first subpoena to the Department of the Interior for documents related to a more than year-long investigation into why an Obama Administration report that recommended a six-month drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico was edited to make it appear as though the moratorium was supported by a panel of engineering experts when in fact it was not.

The first subpoena seeks a portion of the documents previously requested from the Interior Department, most recently in a [letter](#) from January 25, 2012. The specific documents sought in the subpoena include:

1. All documents created, sent, or received by Steve Black, Neal Kemkar, Mary Katherine Ishee, David Hayes and Ted Strickland between April 26, 2010 and June 30, 2010 related to the development, editing, review, issuance, response, or reaction to the May 27, 2010 Department of the Interior report that included a recommendation for a six-month drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico.
2. All 13 documents that the Interior Department has intervened to block the Acting Inspector General from providing to the Committee.

These first items sought should be readily available and capable of being promptly produced. The subpoena deadline is April 10, 2012 at 12:00 PM. Previously requested documents not included in this first subpoena are anticipated to be sought in the near future.

*"President Obama pledged unprecedented transparency and it's regrettable that a Congressional subpoena is necessary to obtain documents pertaining to the Administration's report that recommended a six-month drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico," said **Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings.** "The report falsely stated the professional views of independent engineers and the moratorium directly caused thousands of lost jobs, economic pain throughout the Gulf region, and a decline in American energy production. It's important to clearly understand exactly how this happened."*

## **Background:**

On May 27, 2010, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar published a report at the request of the President entitled [Increased Safety Measures for Energy Development on the Outer Continental Shelf](#) (also referred to as the '30 Day Safety Report'). The report's Executive Summary included a recommendation for an immediate six-month drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico - which the Secretary subsequently imposed - and that resulted in significant economic harm, job loss, and decreased American energy production.

In the report's Executive Summary, the Department states it drew expertise from "within the Federal Government, academia, professional engineers, industry, and other governments' regulatory programs." The drilling report noted seven members of the National Academy of Engineering had peer reviewed the recommendations - making it appear as though they supported the drilling moratorium. However, these peer reviewers were not asked to evaluate the moratorium, which was inserted into the report's Executive Summary - without any apparent technical, scientific or economic analysis - by political appointees at the Department and White House who reviewed and edited the report.

The experts were forced to [rebut the implication](#) that they had approved the six-month moratorium and stated that the moratorium "will not measurably reduce risk further and it will have a lasting impact on the nation's economy which may be greater than that of the oil spill."

Following calls from Republicans on the House Natural Resources Committee, an Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation was conducted. However, in its brief, quick report, the Inspector General was unable to independently verify whether the report's authors intended to mislead the public.

For over a year, numerous document requests have been made to the Administration, which have largely gone unanswered. The Committee's oversight investigation, along with the IG report, has raised a number of questions. These include how the decision to impose the drilling moratorium was made and whether the edits to the report's Executive Summary were intentionally made to suggest the moratorium had been peer reviewed when it was not.

For more information, visit <http://naturalresources.house.gov/oversight/moratorium>

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