

In Case You Missed It

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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[Signs Point to Administration Plan to Lock Up 13M Acres of Federal Land](#)

Brian Wilson
FOX News
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A leaked partial document produced by the Bureau of Land Management and obtained by Fox News suggests the Obama administration is considering a plan to lock up 13 million acres of land -- and the Department of Interior is refusing to answer questions.

First, a little background: The federal government owns about one-third of the land in the United States -- most of it in western states. For example, 84 percent of Nevada is owned by Uncle Sam.

But the government leases large parcels of federal land for all sorts of things -- grazing, mining, exploration, recreation.

Those commercial activities create jobs and tax revenue for the states. Tax revenues from commercial activity on federal lands often pays for local schools. However, with the single stroke of his pen, President Obama can use the Antiquities Act of 1906 to turn federal land into National Monuments.

That would effectively lock up the land from any kind of private use or development.

The plan may actually be more than 13 million acres. Republican members of the House have asked for the rest of the memo, but the Department of the Interior is refusing to hand it over.

Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., said he is worried.

"When the administration is, for lack of a better word, stiffing us -- you know that causes concern," Hastings said during a hallway interview on Capitol Hill. "We do have responsibilities to our constituents to make sure that when there is a huge change on federal lands in their area, that they are part of that process. We are afraid that that process is going to be taken away from them and that's why we're asking for these documents."

Republicans on the House Natural Resources Committee were unable to garner Democratic support for a resolution requiring the Department of Interior to produce some 2,000 documents it has on this matter.

The DOI did cough up 300 e-mails that Republicans say do not reveal very much.

When contacted by Fox News, the department's press secretary hinted that the GOP request is under further review.

"This is an on-going process," Kendra Barkoff wrote. "We may supplement this response as the process is concluded."

There are those who believe these lands are precious -- and should be locked up from development. But in western states this is controversial.

Western state governors are worried that the Obama administration is going to do this quickly and quietly -- without public hearings. They want the process to be more transparent. But for now, those documents are being tightly held by the Obama Department of Interior.

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