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House Votes to Prohibit Federal Government from Mailing Out Cash for Surveys

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House of Representatives today passed, in a bipartisan vote of 355 to 51, an amendment by Congressman Scott Tipton (CO-03) to an amendment to the FY 2013 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act to prohibit the federal agencies under the bill from mailing out cash as an incentive to complete government surveys.

"Enticing survey responses with cash incentives to prove a societal need for a project is wrong on so many levels," **said Rep. Tipton.** *"First and foremost, it's a blatant waste and abuse of taxpayer dollars. Collecting data this way is disingenuous, and a downright sneaky move by this Administration's cadre of out-of-touch bureaucrats."*

In 2011, the Department of the Interior (DOI) distributed a nationwide survey with the questionable purpose of measuring the societal, non-economic value of removing four privately owned dams on the Klamath River in Oregon and California. The survey consisted of several waves of mailings, some of which included a two dollar bill used as an incentive to respond, and a letter sent to non-responders promising that DOI will send an additional $20 if the completed survey is returned before a specific deadline. According to the Federal Register, an estimated 10,400 households were contacted about the survey.

In March 2012, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) and Water & Power Subcommittee Chairman Tom McClintock (CA-04) sent letters to the Bureau of Reclamation and the Office of Management and Budget requesting information on the use of American tax dollars to pay for the controversial DOI survey. The Agencies have since confirmed that the survey in question cost over $850,000.

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