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## Interior Department Called to Testify on Status of Coal Regulation Rewrite and Complying With Subpoenas for Documents

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, as part of a more than [yearlong investigation](#) into the Obama Administration’s rewrite of a 2008 coal regulation, the Stream Buffer Zone Rule, that could cost thousands of jobs, negatively impact the economies of 22 states and significantly harm American energy production, Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) sent a letter to Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Director Joseph Pizarchik inviting them to testify at a July 19<sup>th</sup> oversight hearing.

The hearing will examine 1) the current status of the proposed rewrite and the status of the court settlement agreement providing for the rewrite, and 2) the failure of the Department to comply to date with two subpoenas for documents on the rewrite.

Shortly after taking office, the Obama Administration discarded the 2008 Stream Buffer Zone Rule that underwent five years of environmental review and public comment. The Obama Administration then entered into a court agreement with environmental groups to rewrite and finalize a new rule by June 29, 2012 – a deadline the Administration has missed without explanation.

The Interior Department has failed to comply with two plainly worded [subpoenas](#) for specific documents that the Department should have readily available for production.

[Click here](#) to read the full letter.

*“While the Department has largely stonewalled this Congressional investigation, it remains unclear why this rewrite was initiated to begin with, how the rulemaking process is being managed and, significantly, how the Department and OSM are managing and enforcing existing regulations during this time of uncertainty. What is clear is that the 2008 Rule has been cast aside by this Administration, no replacement rule has been completed, and the Department and OSM continue to hide behind claims of secrecy surrounding ‘ongoing rulemaking’ even though the Administration entered into a settlement agreement before a Federal Court to have a new completed, final coal production rule in place by last month,” wrote Chairman Hastings. “In the continuing effort to achieve compliance and to seek answers and clarity on the Administration’s actions, the Committee will hold the above mentioned oversight hearing to hear directly from the Department. Questions should be expected on the Department’s refusal to comply with the two subpoenas for documents, the current status of the rulemaking, and the Department’s failure to abide by its voluntary court settlement agreement to complete the rule rewrite by the end of last month.”*

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