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After Interior Dept. Fails to Agree to Transcribed Interviews, Hastings States Intent to Call Officials to Testify at Drilling Moratorium Hearing

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) on Friday, July 13 sent a letter to Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar regarding the Committee’s [request](#) for transcribed interviews with five Department officials who were personally involved in developing the May 2010 Interior Department report that falsely stated independent engineers had peer reviewed and supported a drilling moratorium.

In this follow-up letter, Chairman Hastings states that he intends to invite the five Department officials, and possibly other Department officials, to a Full Committee oversight hearing so they can answer questions on the record. Discussions were held between Committee and Department staff regarding the requested interviews, but no interview schedule was agreed upon. The Committee offered a significant compromise to conduct transcribed interviews with only two Department officials and with Steve Black. However, this offer was rejected by the Department, which only offered off-the record interviews away from public scrutiny. The Committee has been [actively investigating](#) the matter for over a year and has issued a subpoena to the Interior Department for documents, to which the Department has almost entirely failed to fully comply.

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

“As explained in the July 6 letter, the Department’s continuing refusal to provide all documents covered by the April subpoena has left the Committee no choice other than to continue to pursue compliance with the subpoena, including to seek necessary information directly from the officials who were most involved in interacting with the peer reviews and drafting and editing the Drilling Moratorium Report,” wrote Chairman Hastings. “For many months, indeed for well over a year, the Committee has sought to be clear, patient, and reasonable, but there are few options that remain where subpoenas for documents are not complied with and requests to interview witnesses in an accountable and transparent manner are uniformly refused. Because of the Department’s unwillingness to date to make Mr. Black and other officials available for transcribed interviews, the Committee intends to invite these witnesses, and possibly other Department officials as necessary, to an oversight hearing of the full Committee so that their testimony and answers to questions may be received on the record.”

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