



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, August 17, 2009

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6 Month “Stimulus” Anniversary: Hastings Asks Administration How Decisions Are Made, What Jobs Have Been Created

Forest Service Sends Money To States with No National Forests, Interior Department Has Paid Out Less than 1% of Funds

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As the trillion dollar “stimulus” bill reaches its six-month mark, House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) sent the [attached letter](#) to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack seeking answers on how spending decisions are being made, why the promise of immediately funding projects hasn’t been kept, and what jobs have actually been created by the low percentage of funds that have actually been paid out.

“After six months, it is clear that the only thing the stimulus bill has done is balloon our national deficit at a record-setting pace,” **said Ranking Member Hastings.** “The Administration told the American people that this bill would create jobs and prevent unemployment from going higher than 8 percent -- yet the national unemployment rate is already 9.4 percent. Where are the jobs that were supposed to be immediately created from this trillion dollar bill? With each passing day, the list of questions regarding this ineffective spending bill grows longer and longer.”

In the letter, Hastings requests answers to the following questions to increase transparency of the decision-making process:

1. An explanation of why the Forest Service is sending millions of stimulus dollars to states (Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts and Rhode Island) that have no Forest Service land? Considering the immense fire-threat posed to communities and states in the Western United States by overgrown and under-maintained Forest Service lands, how is it justified to spend millions of dollars in Northeastern states with no National Forests? Which officials within the Administration, both in the Department of Agriculture and the White House, reviewed and approved the allocation of these funds? For what specific projects were these awards made and what was the specific number of jobs that were to be created?
2. A list of all the stimulus projects that were considered or proposed by the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service as possible projects to receive stimulus funding.

3. A specific explanation of which officials made the decisions to select which projects received stimulus funding. What was the review and approval process within the agency, Department, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the White House, including which officials had a role in the review and decision-making process?
4. The role OMB played in deciding what projects were selected -- including whether OMB approval was required for each project to receive funding.
5. A current estimate of how many jobs have been created as a result of each Department's stimulus spending, preferably on a project-by-project basis.

On August 14th, the [Washington Times reported](#) that the pace of stimulus spending had dramatically declined over the past month. Despite [Secretary Salazar's statement](#) in February that the Interior Department had "a huge backlog of 'shovel-ready' construction projects," [Recovery.gov](#) reports that the Interior Department has [still](#) paid out **less than one percent** of its allocated \$3 billion:



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