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Hastings, Bishop Urge Dept. of the Interior to Comply with Outstanding Documents Request Concerning Decision to Block U.S. Energy Production

Committee Seeks Information on Obama Admin's Justification For 20-Year Ban on Uranium Development in Arizona

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) and National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee Chairman Rob Bishop (UT-01) sent a [letter](#) yesterday to Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar urging the Administration to comply with outstanding requests for documents regarding the Obama Administration's decision to institute a 20-year ban on uranium development on one million acres of federal land in Arizona. The Department has yet to comply with the initial request for information, sent on May 23, 2012. Yesterday's letter asks that the outstanding information be provided to the Committee no later than October 1, 2012.

Read the full letter [here](#).

"Nearly four months have passed since the Committee submitted its request for information and to date the Obama Administration has yet to comply. The Department's lack of response is unacceptable and an affront to Congress' legitimate and Constitutionally based oversight responsibilities. Questions remain as to whether the Administration's decision to withdraw one million acres of land from uranium development in Arizona was based on sound science or political agenda. I urge the Administration to submit the requested documents so that we can complete our oversight investigation into this matter," **said Chairman Hastings.**

"The leaked emails suggest that the Department of Interior intentionally manipulated data and scientific research in order to justify their reckless agenda. The American people deserve to know if there was in fact an effort within the Department of the Interior to mislead the public by 'grossly overestimating' findings included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Shortly after taking office, President Obama stated that 'transparency will be the touchstone of this administration.' Unfortunately, it appears that memo never made it to Secretary Salazar's desk. In fact, this Administration has made a cottage industry out of stonewalling Congress and the American people. In light of this, it comes as no surprise that they have once again failed to comply with our official request for documents and information related to the DEIS. You would think if the science and data weren't overestimated or exaggerated, they'd want to get those facts out there, but they aren't doing that," **said Chairman Bishop.**

Background:

On January 9, 2012, the Obama Administration [announced](#) a 20-year ban on uranium development on one million acres of land in northern Arizona – one of the areas with the most uranium in the United States. The Administration's decision to withdraw these areas from uranium mining terminates a long-standing agreement, forged through compromise between mining interest and environmental groups, and carried out through bipartisan legislation that became law in 1984. The agreement allowed certain areas in Arizona to be protected through Wilderness designations, while others were to remain open for uranium production.

Earlier this year, the Committee obtained National Park Service internal emails that raised significant questions into the science used by the Obama Administration to justify their decision. In the emails, scientists within the National Park Service discussed how the potential environmental impacts were "*grossly overestimated*" in the Administration's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and that the potential impacts are "*very minor to negligible*." In response, Chairman Hastings and Chairman Bishop sent a [letter](#) to Secretary Salazar in May asking for documents, including emails, notes, briefing papers and memoranda, concerning the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the Final Environmental Impact Statement, and the Record of Decision in support of the Northern Arizona Proposed Withdrawal. Chairman Hastings also requested that the Department of the Interior provide complete and unredacted copies of 399 pages previously concealed by the Obama Administration in response to a [document request](#) in 2009.

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