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CONTACT: [Charlie Keller](#) (Personal Office)

(202) 225-5816

[Emily Lawrimore](#)/[Jill Strait](#) (Committee)

(202)226-2311

Hastings Decries Obama Administration Decision to Open Door to Snake River Dam Removal

Top Republican on House Natural Resources Committee says Administration “delivered just what dam removal extremists have been demanding”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) released the following statement on the Obama Administration’s Columbia River salmon recovery biological opinion (BiOp) plan that was released today. Hastings is an outspoken defender of the Northwest’s hydropower dams as clean, renewable sources of low-cost energy. The district that Hastings represents in Congress includes the longest stretch of the Columbia River of any Representative, as well as one of the four threatened dams.

“The Obama Administration has put dam removal back on the table and delivered just what dam removal extremists have been demanding. No one should be fooled by talk of dam removal as a last resort when the Obama Administration is immediately launching studies and plans for such action.

“The extremists who brought this lawsuit may be critical about this plan because dam removal wasn’t delivered on a silver platter with promises of wrecking balls arriving next week, but they got what they wanted from the Obama Administration and they’ll try and convince Judge Redden to give them even more.

“For the past many months, I’ve restrained my public comments on the Obama Administration’s review of the salmon recovery plan for the Columbia River due to the hope they’d recognize the terrible economic toll that dam removal would have on the Northwest in the form of higher energy prices and thousands of lost jobs, and all for an extreme action that science hasn’t shown would lead to fish recovery.

“I warned the Obama Administration that opening the door to dam removal even just a crack would incite dam removal extremists to keep fighting and divert time, attention and resources away from real solutions to recover salmon.

“It was only after dam removal was taken off the table by the prior Administration that the region experienced an unprecedented level of collaboration and broad agreement on a fish recovery plan that is grounded in science and not politics.

"The Obama Administration's resurrection of dam removal has likely doomed the Northwest to years and years of fighting off attacks on our dams.

"It is such a sad, terrible waste that this battle is being reignited, but let there be no doubt that we'll fight to save our dams in every way we can. These dams are here to stay."

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