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Interior Sec. Salazar to Visit Central WA at Chairman Hastings' Invitation

Will discuss Yakima River Basin Water and tour Hanford's historic B Reactor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Sunday, September 18th, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings will host Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar in a visit to Central Washington's Fourth Congressional District for a discussion on Yakima River Basin water and a tour of Hanford's historic B Reactor.

"Secretary Salazar and I discussed his visiting Central Washington in one of our first conversations after I became Chairman," said Hastings in announcing the trip. "I'm honored to host the Secretary for a discussion of water in the Yakima River basin, which is the lifeblood of our local farmers and economy, and for a tour of Hanford's historic B Reactor."

Governor Gregoire and Senator Maria Cantwell will also be welcoming Secretary Salazar to Central Washington for the day's activities. The group's visit will include a stop in Yakima for a roundtable discussion with stakeholders that have been working to achieve consensus on a water resource plan for the Yakima River Basin, a fly-over tour of tens of thousands of acres of orchards and farmland irrigated with water from the Bureau of Reclamation's Yakima irrigation project, and a tour of the historic B Reactor at the Department of Energy's Hanford Site in the Tri-Cities.

"While there are a great many issues that Secretary Salazar and I respectfully disagree upon, and often quite passionately, we share a willingness to work together on matters where there is potential for cooperation and agreement," Hastings said. "I look forward to this visit and showing him around our part of the state."

The House Natural Resources Committee has jurisdiction over a vast array of federal agencies and policies that the Interior Department oversees, including all National Parks and the Bureau of Reclamation, which operates the Yakima Project and the Columbia Basin Project that provides irrigation water to Central Washington's farmers.

As a long-time advocate for preserving the Hanford's historic B Reactor, Hastings led House efforts to enact a law in 2004 directing the National Park Service to study preservation options for Manhattan Project Sites. The recently culminated study resulted in Secretary Salazar's recommendation to include Hanford's B Reactor and two other Manhattan Project sites as national historic parks in New Mexico and Tennessee. Hastings plans to introduce legislation to establish the Manhattan Project Historical Park later this year.

***Additional information and media details about the visit to be announced.**

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