



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Chairman Hastings: DOI Needlessly Increased Costs and Delays for Responding to Oversight Requests

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) sent a [letter](#) today to Department of the Interior Secretary Sally Jewell responding to her September 9th letter on the Committee's oversight efforts. In the letter, Chairman Hastings explains how the Department has still not fully complied with subpoenas and oversight requests for documents, how the Department is wasting time and taxpayer dollars by purposely withholding information from Congress and redacting documents that have already been disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act, and how the Department receives significant appropriations from Congress to specifically respond to information requests from Congress and the public.

"Your letter...provides an incomplete picture of the Department's responses to the Committee's oversight requests. ...The Department's efforts have fallen far short of its obligation to cooperate with Congressional oversight, needlessly increased the cost and delays for responding, and undermined the Obama Administration's pledge to be the most transparent in history," wrote **Chairman Hastings in the letter.**

Specifically the [letter](#) notes:

- The Department should not consider its obligation to keep Congress and the American public informed about how it implements the laws authored by Congress or spending taxpayer money to be either a burden or a distraction.
- The Department's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs and the Office of Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs in FY 2014 had a combined budget of more than \$6.1million and 44 full-time employees responsible for responding to Congressional requests for information.
- The Committee sent requests on only 16 specific topics and has received only 60,000 pages in the past year and a half – about 15,000 pages were duplicates of what the Department had already released to the public under FOIA.
- Based on the Departments numbers, it appears it is spending about \$33 and 34 minutes of staff time for each page it has produced to the Committee.
- The Department is wasting taxpayer dollars by [redacting documents](#) sent to the Committee that were already provided to the public under FOIA.

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