



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Chairman Hastings Seeks Answers Over Shutdown Closures in National Forests and Wildlife Refuges

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) today sent letters to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe and U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell regarding the Obama Administration’s actions to unnecessarily and arbitrarily restrict public access to wildlife refuges and Forest Service lands during the government shutdown. Last week, Chairman Hastings sent a letter to NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis regarding their closures of open-air parks and monuments.

[Click here](#) to read the letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Director Ashe

[Click here](#) to read the letter to U.S. Forest Service, Chief Tidwell

“Just as we have seen in the National Parks across the county, the Obama Administration is arbitrarily and inconsistently barricading open spaces, restricting access to privately operated facilities within the forests, and wildlife refuges, and hurting small businesses that do not rely on federal funds to operate. Again, many of these places were not barricaded during the last government shutdown 17 years ago. The Obama Administration is taking advantage of every opportunity to make this shutdown as painful as possible,” **said House Natural Resources Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04).**

The letters request that necessary steps be taken to keep documents related to these decisions, as the Committee intends to soon send a formal document request letter. The letters also note that the Committee is considering future oversight hearings on the selective closures being implemented by the Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Activities such as hunting and fishing, which are managed by the states, ranching and other recreational uses are being blocked from these sites, many of which are usually unfenced and intermittently staffed or patrolled by Interior or Forest Service personnel. The closure of these wildlife refuges and National Forest lands further illustrates the inconsistent and arbitrary actions of the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service during the government shutdown.

Additionally, the Committee will continue oversight into the inconsistent and arbitrary

closures of privately funded business that happen to be on federal lands. These concessionaires operate with no cost to the Department of the Interior and provide critical services, jobs and often housing to communities dependent on federal lands.

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