



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Committee Passes Legislation to Protect Americans from Skyrocketing Cabin Fees

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House Natural Resources Committee passed H.R. 4873, the *Cabin Fee Act of 2014*, by unanimous consent. This bill, sponsored by Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04), modifies the current cabin fee formula to make it more predictable and fair for families who own cabins in our National Forests.

Cabin owners have recently been faced with arbitrary, skyrocketing fees as a result of a faulty appraisal system that has allowed annual cabin fees to increase exponentially. Unable to afford the mounting fees, owners are faced with the choice of selling their cabins or abandoning and tearing them down. The bill would establish a simple, predictable fee-setting system under which cabin lots are assigned a place on a six tiered fee structure based on current appraisal.

“The Cabin Fee Act will establish a simple, predictable fee-setting system based on a tiered structure. And because future fee increases will be automatic and tied to inflation, it will eliminate the Forest Service’s costly administrative burden of constant appraisals and appeals. I am told that many cabin owners are already falling behind in their payments, so passage of this bill is an urgent matter,” **said House Natural Resources Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04).**

Background

- In 1915, the National Forest Service established the Recreation Resident Program that set aside a small number of residential lots for Americans to build recreational cabins on federal land. The individuals own the cabin structures and pay a yearly fee for the use of the Forest Service lot. There are currently over 14,000 recreational cabin owners across the United States – the majority in the West.
- In 2000, Congress adopted Public Law 106-291 that included a change in the law to implement variable cabin fees based on a subjective appraisal system. This change in the law has resulted in much higher fees than anticipated due to the difficulty in making appraisals that fully take into consideration the uniqueness of the cabins and the many uncommon variables when compared to typical homes and real

estate. With few, or no, true comparable sales, resulting appraisals are subjective and may involve arbitrary determinations.

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