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## **Chairman Hastings Calls on Obama Admin. to Provide Transparent Answers to Outstanding Questions, Disclose Documents on National Ocean Policy Prior to Imposing Final Implementation Plan**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) today sent a letter to the co-chairs of President Obama’s National Ocean Council to repeat his request that the Obama Administration answer outstanding questions and document requests regarding President Obama’s National Ocean Policy and mandatory ocean zoning initiative before finalizing the draft implementation plan. Click [here](#) to read a full copy of the letter sent today.

*“More than two years have passed since President Obama unilaterally issued a new National Ocean Policy that created an expansive federal bureaucracy to manage ocean activities and resources without any specific Congressional approval, and more than eight months have passed since a draft plan was released containing more than 50 proposed actions for implementing the National Ocean Policy and mandatory zoning of the ocean and coastal areas. Despite this passage of time, Congress and the American public are still left questioning the legal justification, regulatory burdens, funding sources, and economic impacts of the National Ocean Policy,” writes Hastings in the letter. “Since last year, a number of specific questions and requests for information have gone unanswered. Based on the lack of specificity in earlier responses and the failure to provide all of the requested information and documentation, it seems apparent the Administration is intent on avoiding scrutiny of its plans to establish this new federal bureaucracy to manage economic and recreational activities affecting the oceans, including those occurring far inland. It is imperative that the National Ocean Council provide the long-requested information before the draft implementation plan is finalized.”*

### **BACKGROUND:**

Chairman Hastings has sent several letters to the Co-Chairs of the National Ocean Council requesting information on the development, legal authority, activities, staffing, and funding of the National Ocean Policy. The Administration has yet to fully comply with the requests. Hastings also sent two letters asking that the Administration extend the public comment period on the draft National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan for an extra 90 days to allow ample time for public and Congressional review of the sweeping new policy. The Administration declined the request.

In May, the House of Representatives [passed an amendment](#) by Rep. Bill Flores (TX-17) to the FY2013 Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to halt funding for the implementation of President Obama's ocean zoning and National Ocean Policy. Over 80 groups across a spectrum of sectors including agriculture, fishing, construction, manufacturing, mining, oil and natural gas, and renewable energy, joined forces in a [letter](#) to support Rep. Flores' amendment. These industries support tens of millions of jobs and contribute trillions of dollars to the U.S. economy. The House also included a provision in the FY2013 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill prohibiting funding for the President's National Ocean Policy and requiring a report on previous funding for the policy.

For more information on President Obama's plans to impose mandatory ocean zoning visit: <http://naturalresources.house.gov/OceanZoning>.

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