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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

July 29, 2013

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The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell,

For several months, many Members of Congress have opposed or had concerns with the Interior Department's National Blueways System (Secretarial Order 3321) due to the lack of transparency, accountability and communication. Indeed, you recently placed a "pause" on the implementation of this administratively created program. While we appreciate your action, it is clear that the Department's Blueways program still exists and could be implemented at any time in the future.

We find this troubling given the growing opposition to this program and our history of concern, which is outlined in an oversight letter sent on June 28, 2013. That letter laid out a series of questions and document requests that would be helpful for the Committee and the public to better understand how this program is actually being implemented as there are very few publicly available documents available.

The questions and the communications requested in this letter as well as others were not answered, further reinforcing the lack of transparency and communication in this program. The Department responded with an informal briefing from Ms. Rebecca Wodder, your Senior Advisor who also serves as Chair of the National Blueways Committee. Unfortunately, the briefing with Ms. Wodder on July 22, 2013 raised more questions than it answered. For example, Ms. Wodder was unable to answer any of the questions contained in the June 28 letter; she was unable to provide the Committee staff with any examples detailing where the work on the Blueways System had been transparent or open to the American people for comment; and she was unwilling to discuss her prior work at American Rivers and how that coincided with the development and initiation of the National Blueways System.

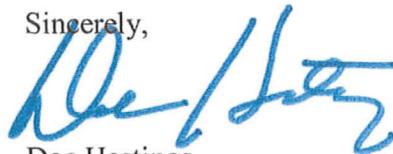
While the opportunity to ask questions of Ms. Wodder is appreciated, the answers were unsatisfactory and it was disappointing to hear from Department staff that no efforts have been made to begin to collecting the documents requested in the letter sent a month ago. Between the letters sent to the Department, the questions asked at the July 17 House Natural Resources Committee Hearing, and the July 17 Water and Power Subcommittee hearing held on this very issue, it is clear that many Members of Congress are concerned about the Blueways program, care deeply about this Order, how it is being implemented, and what the plans are for the future.

A full and complete response from the Department is necessary for the Committee to fulfill its oversight responsibility. The Department's admission a month after receiving a document request that no efforts have been made to even begin the document collection process is unacceptable and frustrates the Committee's constitutional oversight responsibilities. We, and the American public, deserve to know how this taxpayer-funded program is being operated. Please add the follow-up questions from the briefing to the list of questions submitted on June 28. It is expected that the Department will promptly and fully comply with the original June 28, 2013 request without further delay.

1. All documents related to Ms. Wodder's travel in connection with the National Blueways System or the Rivers Initiative between January 2012 and the present, including the cost of all travel to date.
2. The complete invitation list for the Round Table discussion held at the Department of the Interior in February 2013 where American Rivers and several other non-profit groups were invited to attend.
3. Any agenda, schedule, and meeting minutes related to the Round Table discussion held at the Department of the Interior in February 2013.

Enclosed with this letter are instructions and definitions for responding to this request. Please have your staff contact Machalagh Carr at 202-225-2761 in the Office of Oversight and Investigations with any questions.

Sincerely,



Doc Hastings,
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources



Tom McClintock
Chairman
Subcommittee on Water and Power

Enclosure