



Committee Action

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN DOC HASTINGS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, February 22, 2011
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*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

Committee to Hold Oversight Hearing on Interior Department's "Wild Lands" Policy

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Tuesday, March 1st the House Natural Resources Committee will hold a Full Committee oversight hearing on *"The Impact of the Administration's Wild Lands Order on Jobs and Economic Growth."* The Wild Lands policy, established by Secretarial Order, is an attempt by the Interior Department to establish de facto Wilderness areas without Congressional approval.

"This is a prime example of why Congress must exercise vigorous oversight of the Obama Administration," said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings. "The Wild Lands policy expressly circumvents Congress' statutory authority to establish Wilderness areas. Under this policy, the public's access to public lands can be limited or halted entirely – impacting our economy, jobs, recreation opportunities and American energy production. Millions of acres of multi-use land in the West are at risk of being locked-up if the Administration carries out this policy."

"There are so many unanswered questions surrounding the creation of the new Wild Lands designation and this Administration's plans to redo many of the recently completed inventories of public lands," said National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee Chairman Rob Bishop. "In Utah, for example, the BLM just completed an open, seven-year, twenty million dollar process to create resource management plans. Now, this Administration is saying they want to start over. There are thousands of Americans, especially out West, who question the wisdom of such an action and who will be affected by this unilateral secretarial order. We believe this new policy raises a number of troubling questions and that this hearing will be instrumental in bringing greater clarity to the situation."

WHAT: Full Committee Hearing on *"The Impact of the Administration's Wild Lands Order on Jobs and Economic Growth"*

Witnesses:

The Honorable Butch Otter, Governor of Idaho
The Honorable Gary Herbert, Governor of Utah

Additional witnesses to be announced

WHEN: Tuesday, March 1, 2011
2:00 PM

WHERE: 1324 Hearing Room in the Longworth House Office Building

Background:

- Two days before Christmas last year, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar issued Secretarial Order No. 3310 asserting that the Bureau of Land Management has the authority to “designate appropriate areas with wilderness characteristics under its jurisdiction as ‘Wild Lands’ and to manage them to protect their wilderness value.”
- The Wilderness Act of 1964 gives only Congress the authority to designate public lands as Wilderness areas. The Administration does not have the legal authority to impose policies to create *de facto* Wilderness.
- Designating an area as Wilderness imposes the most restrictive land use policies that can be taken. It places severe limitations on public access, prohibits many popular forms of recreation and severely restricts job-creating, and energy-producing activities.

Visit the [Committee Hearings](#) webpage for testimony and additional information, once it is made available. The hearing is open to the public and a live stream will be broadcast at <http://naturalresources.house.gov/live>.

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