

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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## **Statement of Congressman Doc Hastings On S. 22, the Senate Omnibus Public Lands Management Act**

*"We're considering a package of over 170 bills, so we have just 7 seconds to debate each bill's cost and effect upon domestic energy production, American jobs, recreation access to public lands, and border security."*

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – Today, House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) delivered the following floor statement (as submitted for the Congressional Record) regarding the Senate Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (S.22):

"Mr. Speaker, I oppose this motion to consider the Senate Omnibus Lands bill by suspending the rules of the House.

Let us be very clear about what's happening on the House Floor this morning. For weeks and months, Democrat leaders in the Senate and the House, and outside special interest groups, have repeatedly insisted that the House must pass this massive Senate bill without changing a single word or it will be doomed to Senate purgatory and no further action will be taken.

This was the justification given for why every Representative in this House should be blocked from offering their ideas and amendments to improve or change this over 1200 page bill.

Yet this morning, Democrat Leaders are using the special suspension process to amend the Senate bill and simultaneously block every other Representative from offering an amendment.

The Senate's rubicon of not changing one word has now been crossed. S. 22 has been amended. So then why isn't the House allowed to consider additional amendments except the one approved by Democrat leaders. If we change one part of the bill, then this House deserves the opportunity to consider it in an open and fair manner. Instead, Democrat leaders are shutting down everyone from offering amendments, including Democrats who've been publicly outspoken about wanting to remove entire provisions from S. 22 that they strongly oppose. [Urge these Democrats and all House Members to oppose this bill under suspension and demand a fair, open process of debate on this bill in the House.](#)

The suspension process is reserved for noncontroversial bills with little cost to the taxpayer. Indeed, other bills on suspension today include supporting the goals of

International Woman's Day, urging the President to designate 2009 as the Year of the Military Family, and supporting the designation of Pi Day. Yet, this Senate Omnibus Lands Bill costs over 10 billion dollars, and consists of over 170 individual bills being amassed into a 1200 page monster piece of legislation. This is an extreme abuse of the process for considering bills under suspension of House rules.

Under suspension of the rules, the House has only 40 minutes to debate the bill. I've been recognized for 20 of those minutes. With over 170 bills in this Omnibus, that allows just 7 seconds...7 seconds...to debate each bill.

And of these 170 plus bills, some 100 of them have never been passed by the House. Any notion that this is just a packaging of bills already passed by the House is absolutely false. I recognize what I have just spoken about is inside baseball, legislative process arguments, yet it is important for the American public to understand the heavy-fisted manner in which this House is being run. It's also important for all Representatives to understand that this bill has now been amended and that we should have the opportunity to consider other changes to it.

For every Member of the House, there may be a page or two in this 1200 page bill that does something positive in your district. In fact, three separate pieces of legislation that I authored were attached to this package. However, I am more concerned about the other bills that have not been closely examined or debated by the House. This massive bill was written behind-closed-doors with the purpose of creating a package that tries to force individual Members to vote for it in order to get their own small bill passed despite broad policies that will have a serious and harmful impact. Members of the House should consider this bill in its entirety and what it does to our country.

It contains 19 provisions to block American-made energy production, locking away hundreds of millions of barrels of oil and trillions of cubic feet of natural gas. Under this bill, our country becomes less secure as we must rely on foreign imports of energy to fuel our vehicles and run our businesses. When the federal government shuts down energy production here in America, we're sending good-paying jobs overseas. Over 3 million acres of land will be locked up from possible energy production and new jobs won't be created when Americans desperately need them. With our economy reeling and thousands of Americans losing jobs every week, this is a poisonous policy that makes it tougher and more expensive to get America's economy back on track.

This bill bans recreational access to millions of acres of public lands despite proponents' claims that it will protect vast new land areas for the appreciation of Americans. Lands that citizens currently use for enjoyment will be barricaded from recreational vehicle use. Riding a bicycle won't even be allowed. The harm to American's outdoor enjoyment is so outrageous that even ESPN has covered it.

This bill costs 10 billion dollars at a time when taxpayers and our economy simply can't afford it. Our National Parks System can't even keep existing properties open and in working order. With a maintenance backlog of 9 billion dollars on existing lands, Congress should not be passing a 10 billion dollar bill to buy more land and make the problem worse.

This bill makes it more difficult for the Border Patrol and other law enforcement to secure our southern border by restricting vehicle access onto specific lands. This bill would make criminals and potential felons out of children and others who collect fossils on federal lands.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on much longer, but we have only 20 minutes for debate and we're considering a package of over 170 bills, so we have just 7 seconds to debate each bill's cost and effect upon domestic energy production, American jobs, recreation access to public lands, and border security. I urge my colleagues to oppose passage of this bill under suspension of the rules and insist on the ability to consider it under a fair, open process that allows for amendments.”

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