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Republicans Write Letter Opposing de Facto Wilderness Area Designations by U.S Forest Service

"The law is crystal clear that the power to designate wilderness rests squarely and solely with the Congress."

WASHINGTON D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04), National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee Ranking Member Rob Bishop (UT-01) and 16 additional Republican Members of Congress today sent a [letter](#) to the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service opposing the views expressed in a letter from House Democrats requesting that the Forest Service manage Recommended Wilderness Areas as de facto Wilderness Areas. This would be a gross misinterpretation of the law, circumvent Congressional authority and lock up tens of millions of acres of public land.

Citing Wilderness Act statute, the Republicans wrote, *"The law is crystal clear that the power to designate wilderness rests squarely and solely with the Congress. It is a baseless, twisted reading of the law to suggest that Congress intended to allow an agency to administratively declare an area as recommended for wilderness designation and then to manage that area exactly as if Congress had taken action to make such a designation."*

The letter goes on to note that, *"Designating an area as wilderness imposes the most restrictive land use policies that can be taken. As you well know, it places severe limitations on public access to public lands, prohibits motorized and mechanized recreation, severely restricts job-creating and energy producing activities, responsible timber management, and decreases capabilities to respond to fires and emergencies as roads, trails, structures and other facilities are banned."*

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