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## Chairman Hastings' Statement on Fish & Wildlife Service's Announcement to Re-Open Draft Spotted Owl Plan

*"I'm glad FWS agrees parts of this flawed plan need more public comment, but much more comprehensive revisions will be required"*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) agreed, following a [letter](#) from House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings and Reps. Greg Walden, Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Jaime Herrera Beutler, Tom McClintock and Wally Herger, to re-open for an additional 30 days public comment on the controversial proposed habitat modeling related to the Northern Spotted Owl. The announcement came after private citizens, landowners, peer review organizations and federal land management agencies raised concerns about the lack of transparency and arbitrary nature in which the FWS' draft Northern Spotted Owl plan has been developed.

*"I'm glad the Fish and Wildlife Service finally agreed to allow more transparency and public comment on one portion of the plan, but it is clear much more comprehensive revisions should be made before it moves forward," said Chairman Hastings. "Providing an opportunity to review modeling for a month won't address deeper concerns raised by Members of Congress, other federal agencies, private land owners and scientific peer review organizations about other aspects of the overall plan. I'm also skeptical about the FWS' ability to thoroughly take into account any additional comments when the deadline for finalizing the plan has not moved from June 1<sup>st</sup> - just six working days after the additional comment period ends."*

The FWS' Revised Recovery Plan called for drastic new restrictions on private forestland and additional restrictions on Northwest federal lands, while taking no concrete action to address the primary threat to the Spotted Owl--the more aggressive Barred Owl, which continues to prey on the Northern Spotted Owl. The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management reported that these additional habitat restrictions could reduce timber harvest levels on federal lands by as much as 30-90 percent, while doing little to increase Northern Spotted Owl populations. Private landowners have expressed similar concerns about the likely economic impact of the plan on rural communities.

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