

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, May 5, 2009

CONTACT: [Emily Lawrimore](#) or [Jill Strait](#)  
202-226-2311

## **Republicans Stand Up for Rural America, Oppose Efforts to Lock Up Over 24 Million Acres of Public Access Land**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, Republicans at the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands spoke out against the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA, H.R. 980), which would transfer approximately 24 million acres of lands in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming and Utah from public access lands to off-limits wilderness areas.

“The premise underlying this bill is, apparently, that wilderness designation is the only way to protect the outdoor environment. I do not share that view. I do not believe we must lock away the public’s lands from public access in order to conserve it. Not a single one of this bill’s 75 sponsors represents a district that would be affected. Clearly this legislation is being pushed by groups that are out of touch with and do not represent the views of those Americans that would be directly affected by this bill.” - **Rep. Doc Hastings (WA-04), House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member and Co-Chair of the Rural America Solutions Group**

“If people do not care enough about the problems in this bill to make it better, then why is our committee once again spending time considering this legislation? This is the exact same bill we saw two years ago, and even four years ago, yet nothing has been changed to address continual concerns about protecting private property, the ability to properly manage our forests, and the overall cost to implement.” - **Rep. Rob Bishop (UT-01), National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee Chairman**

“For the Montanans who work, till, graze, hunt, fish, hike, camp and enjoy this land, conservation is not only a daily personal choice; it’s our way of life. Real conservation isn’t about making tough decisions for someone else who lives thousands of miles away, yet that’s exactly what NREPA does.” - **Rep. Denny Rehberg (MT – at large)**

“Those of us in Wyoming are proud of the way our state has helped manage and protect our public lands and resources. Good stewardship of the land is a Wyoming value. As a rancher by trade, I hold that ideal in the highest regard. This bill takes the opposite approach to land management in Wyoming and portions of four other western states by locking up more than 24 million acres in the West from the vast majority of responsible, shared uses.” - **Rep. Cynthia Lummis (WY- at large)**

“We live in a resource rich country, we shouldn’t be strangling ourselves economically by not utilizing the resources we have been given or putting them off limits. By importing our

resources from other countries, we are exporting environmental impacts to countries with lower environmental standards; politics instead of science is setting the terms of debate." - **Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05)**

# # #

<http://republicans.resourcescommittee.house.gov>

[Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Twitter](#)