

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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## **Hastings and Rahall Statements on the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill**

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (R-WA) and Chairman Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) today released the following statements on the Gulf of Mexico oil spill:

### Ranking Member Hastings:

“Our immediate priorities must be stopping the leak, cleaning up the oil and responding to the needs of the threatened and impacted communities. We must also not forget the terrible loss of life that has occurred and our condolences go out to the families who have been so tragically affected.

“As Chairman Rahall and I discussed today, the Natural Resources Committee has responsibility for this offshore leasing spill and the natural resource damages caused by the spill, and it’s critical that the Natural Resources Committee continue its active engagement on this matter. Committee staff has been deployed to the region and there have been talks on a bipartisan Committee Member visit to the area when appropriate and when it would not detract from response efforts.

“There are many tough questions that need to be asked and answered on what happened, what went wrong and if the federal government responded appropriately. Those responsible for the spill must be held fully accountable for their actions. These issues and many more must be examined thoroughly and in great detail. However, right now our foremost focus must be on addressing the crisis at hand.”

### Chairman Rahall:

“My thoughts and prayers continue to be with the loved ones of those who were injured and those lost in this tragic explosion in the Gulf of Mexico. Having recently experienced the loss of 29 hard-working miners in my district, I know that the healing process is just beginning. Much as stabilizing and securing the mine was the number one priority at the Upper Big Branch mine in West Virginia, the number one priority in the Gulf right now is to plug the well.

“While it may take a rocket scientist to plug this well, it sure doesn’t take one to know that something went terribly wrong in the Gulf. We must not get in the way of the experts who are working tirelessly to stop the leak. As Chairman of the Committee with primary jurisdiction over oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf, I will ensure that we exercise

our oversight responsibilities to the fullest extent and we will investigate the cause of this disaster.

“Ranking Member Hastings and I dispatched staff members to the Gulf to monitor federal response efforts last week. Once the situation has been stabilized, we intend to send additional staff to the region and will closely monitor events to determine when it may be appropriate to lead a Congressional Delegation to the area.

“The Committee on Natural Resources will hold oversight hearings on May 26 and May 27 to examine the Administration’s OCS oil and gas strategy and the implications of the *Deepwater Horizon* rig explosion. We expect to hear from Interior Department Secretary Ken Salazar, governors from the coastal states, senior executives from British Petroleum and TransOcean, the American Petroleum Institute, and the National Ocean Industries Association.

“We need to know exactly what happened before moving forward, but I will not rule out the possibility that remedial legislation may be necessary to ensure that such a disaster is prevented in the future.”

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