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CONTACT: [Jill Strait](#) or [Spencer Pederson](#)
202-226-2311

Hastings Statement on the President's Gulf Coast Oil Spill Press Conference and Firing of MMS Director Birnbaum

WASHINGTON D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) delivered the following statement regarding President Obama's Gulf Coast oil spill press conference:

"Everyone shares the goal of making American energy production the safest in the world. While there are ongoing investigations into the root causes of this unprecedented spill, it's appropriate to take interim steps to ensure the safety of current drilling operations. Before taking long-term actions to shut down American energy resources so critical to job creation and our energy future, the President has an obligation to understand the impact of his decisions. We need to fix what went wrong, but we also need to fix it in the right way. At the end of the day, our country still needs an all-of-the-above energy plan that includes renewable energy production along with responsible, safe oil and natural gas production."

Hastings also commented on the removal of Elizabeth Birnbaum as Director of the Mineral Management Service, which oversees and regulates offshore drilling in the United States. Birnbaum was appointed to her post by President Obama in 2009. Just yesterday, Birnbaum appeared as a witness with Interior Secretary Ken Salazar at a hearing of the House Natural Resources Committee:

"This is a clear admission that the Obama Administration failed in their oversight responsibilities, but there are still well-documented failings at MMS that must be fixed."

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