

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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## **Democrat Leaders Twist Arms to Defeat Republican Motion on H.R. 31, The Lumbee Recognition Act**

*\$786 Million Bill Doesn't Require Interior Secretary to Verify Indian Ancestry of  
Tribal Members*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings issued the following statement regarding H.R. 31, the Lumbee Recognition Act:

“Until the Democrat Leadership arm-twisted enough of their members to change their votes, a majority of the House voted for my amendment to ensure the Secretary of the Interior verifies that members of the Lumbee tribe are the descendents of historic North Carolina tribes before taxpayers provide \$786 million over the next five years to provide them with benefits and services available for all other recognized tribes.

“Requiring the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service to spend the enormous sum of \$786 million over five years on one new tribe may well result in a dilution of benefits and services provided to all other recognized tribes throughout the United States. It is imperative the Congress exercise more caution than what the Democrats allowed today.

“This common sense amendment is the same as what the Bureau of Indian Affairs requires when it evaluates petitions of groups seeking to be recognized as Tribes. Moreover, the Lumbee bill, H.R. 31, itself declares the Lumbee tribe today is the descendent of these historic tribes - but it makes it illegal for the Secretary of the Interior to verify this.

“If Congress is going to recognize a new Indian Tribe, especially one that would become the third largest in the nation and qualify for federal benefits and payments, at the very least it should ensure that its members are descendants of Indians, but today the House Democrat Leadership chose to ensure the Secretary of Interior is prohibited from doing just that.”

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