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INVESTIGATION: Deadline Set on Request to Interview Interior Dept. Officials Involved in Drilling Moratorium Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, as part of a more than [yearlong investigation](#) into the Obama Administration decision to impose a drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico through a report that was edited in a manner that misrepresented that the moratorium was supported by a panel of engineering experts, Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) [sent a letter](#) setting a deadline on the request to interview Department of the Interior “officials who were personally involved in developing the Drilling Moratorium Report.”

To date, the Department of the Interior has flouted an official Congressional subpoena from the Committee to provide documents and information on this matter. The imposition of the moratorium cost thousands of jobs, caused widespread economic harm throughout the Gulf, and decreased American energy production.

[Click here](#) to read the full letter.

“Absent a valid assertion of a Constitutionally based privilege, the Department’s continuing refusal to provide certain requested documents violates the subpoena and frustrates Congress’ ability to fulfill its Constitutional oversight responsibilities. As such, the Committee is left with no choice other than to continue to pursue compliance with the subpoena, as well as seek necessary information directly from the officials who were most involved in interacting with the peer reviewers and drafting and editing the Drilling Moratorium Report,” wrote Chairman Hastings. “The interviews are necessary to obtain information relevant to the Committee’s oversight investigation, and the need for them is heightened given the Department’s repeated refusal to provide documents even in the face of a duly authorized and issued Congressional subpoena. The Department’s failure to respond to the request to schedule interviews calls into question the sincerity of its recent statements about wanting to reach a mutually agreeable accommodation of the Committee’s oversight interest into this matter.”

Today’s letter sets a deadline of July 12th for establishing a schedule for the interviews to occur the week of July 16th. The officials to be interviewed are:

- Steve Black, Counselor to the Secretary
- Neal Kemkar, Special Assistant to Mr. Black (currently on detail to the White House Council on Environmental Quality)

- Mary Katherine Ishee, former Deputy Administrator, Minerals Management Service (currently serving as Senior Advisor, Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement)
- Walter Cruickshank, former Deputy Administrator, Minerals Management Service (currently serving as Deputy Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management)
- Kallie Hanley, former White House Liaison & Special Assistant (currently serving as Senior Advisor, Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs)

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