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Interior Dept. Defies Subpoena for Documents & Now Refuses to Commit Witnesses to Attend Hearing to Answer Questions on Gulf Drilling Moratorium

Investigative hearing rescheduled "to ensure cooperation"

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of the Interior has refused to confirm that it will make available five Department officials invited to testify and answer questions at a Full Committee hearing on Wednesday regarding the May 2010 Interior Department action to impose a six-month drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico and the Department's report that falsely stated independent engineers had peer reviewed and supported a moratorium.

In light of the Department's refusal, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings announced that the Wednesday hearing would be rescheduled to allow time to ensure cooperation. The rescheduled hearing is expected to occur in September when the House returns to session after the traditional August work period.

The initial hearing was [announced](#) on July 18th, and invitation letters were sent to five individuals who are known to possess information relevant to the matter under investigation, after the Department refused to schedule on-the-record interviews of the five individuals by Committee staff. The request for on-the-record interviews was first made in February 2012 and follow-up letters were sent on [July 6, 2012](#) and [July 13, 2012](#).

Multiple contacts and inquiries were made to the Department and the five invited witnesses, including inquiries made to the Department today (Tuesday), without receiving a direct response confirming their attendance.

"There is a clear pattern of actions by the Interior Department to withhold information and answers on the Administration's falsely edited report and decision to impose a Gulf drilling moratorium that cost thousands of jobs, inflicted widespread economic harm and restricted American energy production. The Department is refusing to comply with a Congressional subpoena for documents and now they refuse to make key individuals in the Department available for on-the-record questioning. This investigative hearing will happen and will be rescheduled to ensure cooperation," **said Chairman Doc Hastings.**

The hearing scheduled for Wednesday, July 25th at 10am was titled *"Investigation of President Obama's Gulf Drilling Moratorium: Questioning of Key Department of the Interior Officials."*

The Department officials invited to testify at the hearing include:

- Steve Black, Counselor to the Secretary
- Neal Kemkar, Special Assistant to Mr. Black
- Mary Katherine Ishee, Deputy Administrator, Minerals Management Service
- Walter Cruickshank, Deputy Administrator, Minerals Management Service
- Kallie Hanley, White House Liaison & Special Assistant

*Note: Titles reflect position held in May 2010 when the Drilling Report was produced.

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