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Thursday, July 9, 2009

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Ranking Member Hastings' Statement on Decision to Postpone Markup of Native Hawaiian Recognition Bill

Administration's Position Still Unknown, Sources say Department of Justice Seeks Changes to Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) released the following statement today regarding Chairman Nick Rahall's decision to postpone consideration of H.R. 2314, the *Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2009*, at today's Committee markup:

"Mr. Chairman, I commend you for not calling up H.R. 2314, the Native Hawaiian recognition bill. I would respectfully request that a markup of that bill be postponed until after the Members of the Committee have had ample opportunity to evaluate the views of the Obama Administration and, in particular, the concerns of the Department of Justice.

To date, I am unaware that the Administration has expressed any views on this bill. I have seen reports that President Obama supports Native Hawaiian recognition, notwithstanding that the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the Department of Justice previously raised constitutional concerns over what they called 'race-based classifications.'

It is my understanding from sources in the Administration that the Department of Justice wants changes made to this bill, but no one on my side of the aisle has been informed of what these are. Perhaps if a witness from the Administration had testified at the hearing on this bill, their concerns would be clearer.

I would hope that a markup of this bill can be held off until such time as all Members of the Committee are well-acquainted with the Administration's views and recommendations."

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