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Chairman Hastings' Statement on Obama Administration's Release of Final Northern Spotted Owl Critical Habitat Rule

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) released the following statement after the Interior Department released the final critical habitat rule for the Northern Spotted Owl:

“The Obama Administration spent months working to revise a plan that was fatally flawed from the beginning. While this final rule must be fully reviewed, I remain very concerned that it will cost millions of taxpayer dollars and lock up large portions of federal land without addressing the root of the issue, the predatory Barred Owl. Expanding the Northern Spotted Owl’s critical habitat will further endanger the timber industry, the thousands of jobs that the industry supports, and forest health. The 2012 wildfire season has been one of the worst on record. Washington state alone saw over 300,000 acres burned, including over 35,000 acres of current and proposed spotted owl habitat. The Forest Service has also reported that the additional loss of habitat from post-fire beetle infestation would ‘adversely impact the spotted owl population.’ We need a solution based on sound science that will allow for active management to improve forest health, increase economic opportunity and jobs for our rural communities and schools, while also addressing the Barred Owl and protecting the Northern Spotted Owl from catastrophic wildfire.”

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