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Committee Approves Amendment to Keep OSM and BLM Separate, Independent Agencies

Move a Rejection of Obama Administration's Unilateral Attempt to Merge Agencies

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House Natural Resources Committee approved an amendment by voice vote, to H.R. 3404, offered by Rep. Bill Johnson (OH-06). The amendment was a rejection of the Obama Administration's recently announced intentions to merge the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Specifically, the amendment keeps OSM and BLM separate, independent agencies in the Department of the Interior and under the purview of the Under Secretary for Energy, Lands and Minerals.

In October, Interior Secretary Salazar [announced intentions](#) to merge OSM into BLM, two agencies with distinctly different missions within the Department of the Interior. Since the announcement there has been significant, bipartisan concern regarding the Secretary's statutory authority to perform the merger and its effect on coal mining jobs and coal production.

"I'm pleased the Committee approved my amendment to protect the integrity of these two separate but equally important agencies. The attempt to merge these two agencies is yet another action by the Obama Administration in its ongoing war on American coal. There are serious statutory concerns with the Interior Department's unilateral decision to merge OSM within BLM that could ultimately affect thousands of hardworking coal miners," said Rep. Johnson. "This amendment protects American jobs, ensures that the Obama Administration cannot skirt the laws passed by Congress, and guarantees these two agencies stay distinct entities within Interior Department while maintaining their individual, critical missions."

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