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Democrat Majority Proceeds with Markup of Native Hawaiian Bill Despite Strong Opposition

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings offered a motion to postpone the markup of H.R. 2314, the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2009, until February 24, 2010 – allowing interested parties 60 days to thoroughly review proposed changes to the bill. Last night, Hawaii Attorney General Mark Bennett on behalf of Governor Linda Lingle sent a [letter](#) stating “strong opposition” to the latest version of the bill, which was unveiled only after the Committee suddenly announced its intention last Friday to markup and advance the altered text.

The Democrat Majority defeated the motion to postpone and the Committee will proceed this afternoon with consideration of the bill.

Ranking Member Hastings delivered the following statement:

“Mr. Chairman, under clause 4 of Rule 16 I move that the consideration of the bill be postponed until February 24, 2010.

To explain, to postponing consideration of this bill until Wednesday, February 24th will allow 60 days for all parties to thoroughly review and analyze this bill, as well as provide this Committee with sufficient time to hold a public hearing, or public hearings, on the proposed changes reflected in the Abercrombie amendment in the nature of a substitute that has been filed to H.R. 2314.

This substitute rewrites significant portions of the bill and time is needed to understand the changes and hear from people who will be impacted. This includes allowing time for the Governor and Attorney General of the State of Hawaii to fully review this bill. Each member of the Committee has received a copy of the letter sent last night to Chairman Rahall and myself by the Attorney General of Hawaii on behalf of the Governor that expresses their “strong opposition” to the proposed changes. Their opposition is especially concerning considering these two leaders have been active and vocal advocates of the original text of H.R. 2314 for many, many years. They’ve worked hand-in-hand with the Hawaii Congressional delegation in support of the original text of the bill. Over the years, they’ve both traveled here to Washington, D.C. and testified to Congress in favor of the original text of the bill. Now that the bill has been substantially rewritten behind closed doors, they’ve been compelled to send a five-page letter expressing opposition to the

proposed changes the Committee is scheduled to consider today. The Attorney General and Governor have only had the full text of the proposed changes for a matter of, literally, hours. Postponing until February 24th will allow them time to fully review the changes and have their concerns understood and considered by this Committee.

Postponing consideration until February 24th ensures that this Committee does not attempt to rush these proposed changes through this hastily-scheduled markup and prevent a fair opportunity for the rewritten text to be thoroughly analyzed and vetted by all affected and interested parties.

To repeat my motion, I move that the Committee postpone consideration of the bill until February 24, 2010.”

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