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Amid Renewed Lawsuits, Chairman Hastings Calls on Obama Admin. to Answer Questions on Job Destroying Coal Regulation

WASHINGTON D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) today sent a letter to Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to follow up on a more than [two and a half year investigation](#) into the Obama Administration's decision to throw out the 2008 Stream Buffer Zone coal regulation, and write a new regulation that could destroy up to 7,000 coal mining jobs and cause economic harm in 22 states. The Obama Administration has wasted millions of taxpayer dollars delaying the finalization of their job destroying proposed regulation for four years and is now facing [renewed lawsuits](#) from environmental litigants who are demanding the Administration continue its war on coal and complete its economically disastrous regulation.

"Over the last two years, this Committee has sent 9 letters to the Department and not a single deadline has been met. In April and May of 2012, the Department received two subpoenas for the production of documents. Not one single line item in either subpoena has been complied with," wrote Chairman Hastings. "With the lawsuits being renewed by the environmental organizations, pressuring the Department to rush through an already bizarre rulemaking process, it is now more important than ever that the Department disclose all documents and information the Committee has sought for two years regarding President Obama's decision to discard a science based coal production rule and implement a new, job destroying regulation."

[Click here](#) to read the letter.

As the Committee enters into its third year investigating the initiation of the rulemaking process, the Department has yet to fully comply with any the Committee's requests for documents, information or updates on process and procedure. Today's letter specifically asks for the Department of the Interior to promptly provide an update on the progress of the coal regulation, including the following information:

1. What is the status of OSM's work on the Stream Protection Rule?
 - a. Is the Environmental Impact Statement for the Stream Protection Rule completed?
 - b. Is the Regulatory Impact Analysis for the Stream Protection Rule

completed?

- c. When does OSM anticipate proposing the Stream Protection Rule?
2. How much money has been spent to date on this rulemaking effort?
3. How many staff are currently assigned to this rulemaking effort full time?
4. How many staff were assigned to this rulemaking effort between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2012?
5. Any and all communication between the Department of the Interior and any of the following organizations between December 1, 2008 and present: National Parks Conservation Association, Coal River Mountain Watch, Kentucky Waterways Alliance, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, Save Our Cumberland Mountains, Sierra Club, Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, Waterkeeper Alliance, and West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.
6. Copies of any and all contracts, agreement, or scope of work documents related to the Environmental Impact Statement or Regulatory Impact Analysis of the Stream Protection Rule, including any contracts with third-party contractors or subcontractors contracted to work on the Rule.

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