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## Chairman Hastings: Documents Raise Serious Questions about Thoroughness and Independence of Inspector General's Investigation into Drilling Moratorium Report

*Hastings sends letter to IG and releases documents received by Committee to date*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) today sent a [letter](#) to Department of the Interior's Acting Inspector General Mary Kendall expressing deep concern with the thoroughness of the Office of Inspector General's (IG) investigation into whether an Obama Administration report that recommended a six-month drilling moratorium was intentionally edited to incorrectly state the views of peer reviewers, and with the IG's explanation for refusing to comply with a Congressional subpoena for further information.

Chairman Hastings today also released documents the Committee has received to date from the Interior Department and the Office of Inspector General. This includes emails from the IG's lead investigators that details how they were not able to obtain all DOI documents that may have been relevant to their investigation or interview White House staff involved in the editing of the report. Chairman Hastings has already requested additional emails from the IG's office so that the Committee can continue to look into this matter. [Click here to view documents.](#)

*"The IG report is being used by the Obama Administration and others as a defense that this matter has already been investigated and resolved. These emails contradict that claim and raise new questions on whether the IG's investigation was as thorough and complete as it should have been," said Chairman Hastings. "To date, the Interior Department has never had to disclose documents to the IG or to Congress. Despite the President's pledge of transparency, this Administration has not answered questions by anyone on how this decision was made that forced thousands of Americans out of work and cost millions of dollars in lost economic activity."*

Excerpts of the letter from Chairman Hastings:

*"Documents recently obtained from your office raise serious questions about the thoroughness and independence of the IG's investigation, including whether the lead investigators were able to obtain, or were directed not to obtain, all internal Department documents necessary to independently confirm witness statements and other facts at issue in the investigation, as opposed to only a select few documents provided by the same senior Department officials*

*subject to the investigation or publicly available documents. This approach seems in direct contrast to how the IG handled similar high-profile investigations of alleged scientific misconduct in the previous Administration.”*

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*“Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar stated in a November 9, 2010 letter to you that the report ‘confirms there was no wrongdoing or intent to mislead the public.’ However, the IG’s November 2010 report confirmed that White House officials were involved in editing the report and were responsible for the incorrect peer review language but did not address the central question of whether the peer reviewer’s role was intentionally misconstrued to mislead the public and provide cover for the moratorium.*

*“Notwithstanding its apparent shortcomings, the IG’s November 2010 report has been used by the Department to justify its refusal to provide documents that would allow Congress to evaluate for itself the circumstances surrounding the editing of the Drilling Moratorium Report and the imposition of the moratorium.”*

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*“After more than a year of trying to obtain documents from the Department, much is still unknown about these events. The Department has consistently refused to release drafts of the Drilling Moratorium Report or internal documents between the senior Department and White House political appointees who were involved in editing the Drilling Moratorium Report. The Department has never disclosed – either to the IG or to Congress – the internal Department emails surrounding the edits to the Drilling Moratorium Report... This lack of responsiveness and transparency about what really led to the moratorium and the incorrect peer review language necessitated the issuance of subpoenas to both the Department and the IG. I am deeply frustrated by the Department’s – and now the IG’s – reliance on vague and unsubstantiated claims of confidentiality as justification to refuse to comply with these duly issued and authorized subpoenas.”*

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*“Absent a legitimate assertion of Executive Privilege, I see no justification for the Department or the IG to refuse to comply with a duly issued and authorized subpoena based solely on the confidentiality claims articulated to date. Given the significance of the harm caused by the moratorium and of the questions raised by the IG’s investigation, it is important that Congress and the American public have a full accounting from the IG and the Department into the circumstances surrounding the Drilling Moratorium Report.”*

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