



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, December 12, 2013
[Permalink](#)

CONTACT: [Press Office](#)
202-226-9019

Chairman Hastings Looks Ahead to 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) delivered the following statement at today’s Full Committee hearing previewing several activities and focuses for next year:



[Click here to watch](#)

“Before proceeding with today’s hearing, there are several general announcements that I would like to make regarding Committee business.

This is the last hearing of the year, and as those gathered know, it is part of this Committee’s continuing review of the Endangered Species Act and how the law could be improved to prioritize recovery and science over lawsuits and closed-door settlements. This effort will continue in the New Year where it is my expectation that the Committee will begin to advance common sense ESA improvement legislation that will truly benefit species and people.

Second, in September of this year, the Committee’s completed its eighth hearing on renewing the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. I’m announcing today that within the next week, a discussion draft of a reauthorization bill will be released for public review and input. This will be followed by a hearing on legislation in January.

Other priority matters that the Committee will address next year include protecting and expanding American hydropower dams, pursuing solutions to build more water storage, and a committed focus on restoring the promise made to our rural counties and schools by ensuring responsible, active management of our national forests.

Over the past year, great patience has been shown in conducting several oversight requests to the Interior Department and other agencies. What is sought is transparency, information, and accountability on decisions and actions made by the Department and other agencies. To date, the Interior Department's response has been far less than satisfactory, and in several instances our questions appear to be met with deliberate slow-walking by attorneys. This is not acceptable, and after many months of patient persistence, unless prompt compliance comes very soon, more direct steps will be taken to ensure the Department fulfills its oversight obligations to this Committee and the Congress.

Finally, it was my hope that a last markup of the year could occur this week. Regrettably, that wasn't possible for tomorrow. Will now look ahead to early January to continue the hard work begun this year. Over the past twelve months, the Committee has continued its workhorse ways. The House has passed 50 bills from the Committee, each with bipartisan support. This includes 41 bills passed under the suspension process – which means each of these bills had broad, overwhelming, and bipartisan support in the House. More than 30 of these measures await action in the Senate – a number have had Senate hearings, and several have been reported from Senate Committees and await action of the full Senate. And between our work and the Senate, 10 bills have been signed into law by the President. As we enter next year, it is my intent to continue to work to achieve enactment of common sense solutions and legislation.

Here are two examples. In January, it is my specific intent to advance legislation advocated by Rep. Dan Benishek to resolve a longstanding situation in Northern Michigan by recognizing boundaries and establishing a Sleeping Bear Dunes wilderness area. Dr. Benishek has been working overtime to get this accomplished. Both he and Senator Levin have this as a priority and I'm committed to working with them because I believe it's possible to reach an appropriate resolution that accomplishes their goal. There is also public lands and wilderness legislation that Representative Mark Amodei has been tirelessly working to advance. Due to his persistent efforts, action will occur in January.

These are not easy issues. They require careful consideration and thoughtful action to ensure they are done right. That's how we've approached our work at this Committee, and we'll continue to do so in January."

###

NaturalResources.house.gov

