

The Honorable Doc Hastings
Ranking Republican, House Committee on Natural Resources
Statement to the Committee on House Administration
February 3, 2010

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lungren and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to make brief comments concerning the Natural Resources Committee and funding from the perspective of the Republican minority.

First, we do receive a full third of the staff salary funds to administer, and we receive 20 staff positions out of the 69 allocated to the Committee. In an arrangement that predates my time as Ranking Member, nine of the 69 positions have been deemed administrative positions that support both sides of the Committee. The Majority pays the salaries of these nine from their two-thirds share. While most of the tasks performed by these nine are managed by the Majority, we have no complaints over the responsiveness or services rendered to the Minority over the past year.

Second, a sizeable portion of the unspent Committee funds for 2009 is attributable to unspent staff funds from the Minority's one-third share. There are two reasons for the unspent funds. One, I've always believed that the funds allocated to Committees and personal Congressional offices should be allocated frugally and wisely. During my service in the House, I've returned funds from my personal office allocation in each and every year.

The other reason for the unspent funds is that 2009 was my first year as Ranking Member, and, as such, there was turnover on the Republican staff and not all staffing positions were filled the entire year. For example, several staff departed near the end of the year, and these positions are just now being filled. In fact, just last week, I announced the hiring of three new staff. It's my expectation that we'll soon be at full staff levels in preparation for the Second Session.

In conclusion, I have no concerns or complaints about the administration of Committee funds. Chairman Rahall and I do disagree over a fair number of policy matters under our Committee's jurisdiction, but I believe we share a common belief that political or policy differences should not be injected into Committee budget and administration matters. I appreciate his actions in this regard.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.