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**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 19, 2011

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The Honorable Doc Hastings  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 401(b)(3)(A)(ii) of the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25) provides that:

Not later than October 14, 2011, each Committee of the House of Representatives and the Senate may transmit to the joint committee its recommendations for changes in law to reduce the deficit consistent with the goal described in paragraph (2) for the joint committee's consideration.

The specific goal mentioned in the above-quoted section is to reduce our nation's deficit by at least \$1.5 trillion between fiscal years 2012 and 2021. Given the enormity of this task, and its importance to our nation's future, it is imperative that the Natural Resources Committee exercise this authority thoughtfully, and in an expeditious and transparent manner. Last week, the Natural Resources Committee Democratic staff contacted the Majority staff to inquire about your plans for exercising the Committee's responsibilities under this section of the Budget Control Act, and they were told that they did not know how you wished to proceed with respect to development and transmittal of any such recommendations. Since that inquiry was made, the Minority has heard nothing further with respect to how you intend to proceed.

According to media reports, in remarks at a forum sponsored by the American Petroleum Institute, you have suggested opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas drilling as one idea you plan to present to the joint committee. I also understand that you have scheduled a full committee hearing on this topic for September 21.

While individual Members of the House are free to suggest anything to the joint committee, I believe that any official recommendation submitted on the behalf of our Committee should actually be brought before the Committee for debate and consideration. I therefore request that you schedule a Committee business meeting, prior to the October 14, 2011 deadline, during which any proposed recommendations to the joint committee can be considered pursuant to regular order.

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This should include an opportunity for Members to offer their ideas on ways to help reduce the size of the federal deficit, and, if appropriate, to additional or dissenting views to accompany any final Committee report or message to the joint select committee.

Further, I request that any hearings held on proposed recommendations to the joint committee should include topics proposed by the Minority as well as witnesses invited by the Minority.

The Standing Committees of the House, which have expertise on federal programs and activities within their jurisdiction, bear significant responsibility in providing the joint committee effective, viable solutions to our current fiscal crisis. The recommendations of the House Natural Resources Committee will benefit from a rigorous, transparent process and I look forward to working with you and the other Members of the Committee to ensure there is such a process.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey  
Ranking Member