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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

July 28, 2006

Ms. Elaine Brong
State Director
Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management
333 SW First Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Director Brong:

I am writing regarding public access issues surrounding the Juniper Dunes Wilderness and associated Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) area. Providing public access to these areas should be a high priority.

As you are aware, the Juniper Dunes area has long been a popular recreation area, noted for its sand dunes and groves of western juniper trees that are truly unique in the Pacific Northwest. The 1984 designation of a wilderness area and OHV area, along with the continued population growth in the nearby Tri-Cities, has only added to the public interest in this site. However, because it is nearly surrounded by private property, it has been an ongoing challenge to secure long-term, permanent public access. In many cases, people have trespassed across private property to access this area. This has become more of a problem in recent months without a standing agreement between the BLM and private property holders over access to Juniper Dunes.

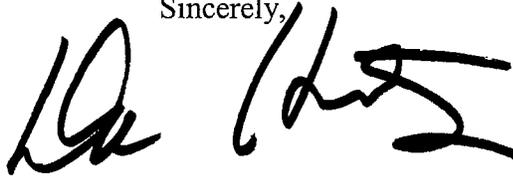
I believe federal land management agencies have an important obligation to provide access to the people that fund the acquisition, protection and maintenance of public lands with their tax dollars. I also strongly support private property rights and believe the federal government should be a good neighbor and reduce any negative impacts of federal land ownership on adjacent land owners. For these reasons, I am very interested in seeing an agreement reached that provides for well-regulated public access to Juniper Dunes without infringing on the property rights of adjacent landowners.

It is my understanding that the BLM has been engaged in ongoing discussions with private property holders, OHV users, Franklin County Commissioners, and other interested parties in an effort develop solutions to this problem. I would like to know what progress has been made to date to provide access to Juniper Dunes in the near-term through a temporary lease agreement or other means. I would also like to be informed of the BLM's position on resolving the longer-term issues, including what would be required to provide permanent access, improve road conditions and to enhance law enforcement in the area.

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Thank you for your attention to my requests. I appreciate your efforts to resolve difficult land management issues and look forward to hearing from you soon on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doc Hastings', written in a cursive style.

Doc Hastings
Member of Congress