



News From

## Congressman Doc Hastings

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### Statement from Congressman Doc Hastings

*At the East Benton County Historical Museum today Congressman Doc Hastings announced details of his plan protect the opportunity for scientific study of ancient remains like Kennewick Man. The following is a Hastings' statement from his visit to the museum as prepared:*

Thank you all for being here today. It is great to see those of you who have worked so closely to support scientific study of the Kennewick Man remains.

As some of you are aware, in 1996, when it became clear that federal agencies were going to block any scientific study of Kennewick Man and instead move as quickly as they could to dispose of the bones and allow tribes to bury them in secret, I authored an extensive piece of legislation to ensure that tribal remains were protected – but that ancient remains with no direct connection to present day Indian tribes could be studied.

In fact, the federal agencies were so intent to get rid of the bones and block scientific study, I had to introduce another bill simply designed to block the agencies from taking such action. Unfortunately, the Army Corps of Engineers completely buried the Kennewick Man site before Congress could pass my emergency legislation.

Eventually the fate of Kennewick Man was tied up in court as scientists sought to study the ancient remains. The litigation dragged on for years, and during that time I didn't reintroduce my original bill because it was a matter before the courts. Ultimately, the district court ruled decisively against the actions of the federal agencies and strongly in favor of allowing scientific study. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld this decision. Scientific study was assured, Kennewick Man was being researched and I did not reintroduce my original legislation.

However, I am concerned by a proposal in the Senate that's been acted on in Committee twice that seeks to undermine scientific study and these court rulings with a two word "technical correction". In reality this is anything but technical. It would totally undermine scientific study and reverse what has been a clear loss for the federal agencies in court.

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Additionally, there are other instances like Kennewick Man where litigation threatens to prevent scientific study – like the Spirit Cave Man remains of Nevada. So, today, I am proposing this new bill to strongly reaffirm the importance of scientific study and to counter legislative efforts to overturn case law and common sense. This bill is simple and direct. It clarifies the original intent of Congress and codifies the Kennewick Man court decision.

My proposal protects the rights of present day Native Americans to claim the remains of their ancestors when found on federal lands. At the same time, it reiterates that in cases of truly ancient human remains – such as Kennewick Man – Congress does not intend to block scientific study. My bill ensures that the study of Kennewick Man and others like him will continue to advance our scientific understanding of the earliest inhabitants of the Americas.

Thank you all for being here today.