

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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Opening Statement of Rep. Diana DeGette
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
“The Views of the Administration on Regulatory Reform”
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
January 26, 2011

Both Democrats and Republicans have supported laws to protect the health, environment, financial security, and safety of the American public. Today’s hearing is about how to ensure that the regulatory system that implements these laws functions as efficiently and as effectively as possible.

This is laudable goal that both sides of the aisle should support.

The President’s new executive order on improving regulation and regulatory review is an excellent starting point. The order is based on sound principles such as:

- The regulatory system must be based on the best available science,
- Regulations protect public welfare while promoting economic growth and job creation,
- The process must allow for public participation and the open exchange of ideas, and
- The process must take into account both costs and benefits.

Consistent with this directive, the Obama Administration has already identified several regulations that could be refined or cut.

I commend the Administration for this effort. And I hope that we can work together to support cost-effective implementation of the laws Congress has enacted to protect the American people’s health, financial security, and safety. These sensible safeguards are vitally important to the American people.

We must recognize, however, how important regulations are to our national welfare. The mantra that regulations are inherently bad and kill jobs is wrong and dangerous.

Just two and half years ago, our financial system virtually collapsed. Following years of deregulatory efforts by Congress, the Securities and Exchange Commission and other federal

financial regulators sat on the sidelines while flawed and unchecked financial practices robbed Americans of their retirement savings and caused the our economy to collapse.

It wasn't regulations that caused our financial collapse and the deepest economic recession since the Great Depression. It was unbridled deregulation.

For too long, big polluters have been allowed to dump toxic mercury into the air – resulting in birth defects and developmental problems for children in affected communities. Finally – after years of delay – the Administration is taking action to rein in this toxic contamination. We should all support these efforts.

At the direction of the Supreme Court, EPA has recently set standards to cut carbon pollution from cars and trucks. This regulation is a win-win. Not only does it cut pollution responsible for climate change, it saves 1.8 billion barrels of oil – making the nation more secure and saving American families at the pump.

Regulation to protect children from the health effects of tobacco and to prevent another salmonella outbreak in eggs or other threats to food safety are other important examples of where government is on schedule to act and must do so.

When you examine the details of these and other safeguards, you find that there is a real need for governmental action and that action will substantially benefit the public and the nation.

I look forward to hearing from our witness regarding implementation of the Obama Administration's executive order on improving regulations and the regulatory process. This is a common sense plan to cut outdated regulations and promote transparency. In contrast, the Republican plan to eliminate safeguards vital to the welfare of Americans makes absolutely no sense at all.