

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “The FY 2013 EPA Budget”
Subcommittee on Energy and Power and Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy
February 28, 2012

Administrator Jackson, thank you for being here today and for the outstanding leadership you have provided to the Environmental Protection Agency. Under your leadership, EPA is making our air safer to breathe and our water safer to drink. And you are doing so in a way that will strengthen our economy and create jobs.

Congress should be your partner in these efforts, but since Republicans took control last January, the House of Representatives has tried to undermine your efforts every step of the way.

The EPA budget represents a small portion of overall federal spending. Under the President’s proposal for fiscal year 2013, EPA funding would be less than one-quarter of one percent of the federal budget. And EPA would share over 40% of these funds with the states and tribes to help implement federal environmental laws and achieve national goals.

But today we will hear that your budget is too big. We will be told that we can’t afford investing in clean air and water.

These attacks are really part of a broader agenda.

This has been the most anti-environmental House of Representatives in history. House Republicans have voted over 200 times to undermine basic environmental protections that have existed for decades. They have voted to block actions to prevent air pollution; to strip the Environmental Protection Agency of authority to enforce water pollution standards; to halt efforts to address climate change. Cutting EPA’s funding is just another way to limit the agency’s effectiveness.

This is an extreme agenda. American families want clean air and clean water. They don’t want their health put at risk by exposure to toxic chemicals.

The American people understand that putting off action to protect public health and the environment is reckless. Delay will sacrifice public health in the short-run and increase clean-up costs in the long-run.

Stalling action on climate change means more intense and frequent heat waves, more droughts, more flooding, and more loss of coastline. According to the International Energy Agency, delaying action until the end of the decade will quadruple the costs to the global economy.

Inadequately funding cleanups of Superfund sites will increase their complexity and costs.

Delaying investment in our drinking water systems will put the safety of our water at risk and allow deferred costs to grow and grow.

The American people want a safe and healthy environment. They want to know that the air they breathe and the water they drink is safe.

And they want Congress to start listening to them instead of the oil and coal industries.

One-quarter of one percent of our budget is not too much to spend on clean air and clean water and a healthy environment.

In fact, I believe it may not be enough.