

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 “Regulatory Reform Series # 7 –
The EPA’s Planning, Analysis, and Major Actions”
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
September 22, 2011

This hearing is our seventh hearing on regulatory reform, and we will be told by our colleagues across the aisle that EPA needs to do a better job. We’ll hear that they need to better analyze regulations before finalizing them . . . that they need to listen to concerns about their proposals before acting.

But this hearing isn’t really about regulatory reform. It is just a continuation of a long series of attacks on our environment and our public health. This is the most anti-environment House of Representatives in history.

So far this Congress, the House of Representatives has voted again and again to block action to address climate change, to halt efforts to reduce air and water pollution, to undermine protections for public lands and coastal areas, and to weaken the protection of the environment in other ways.

Mr. Chairman, my staff prepared a database last month on every anti-environmental vote taken in this Congress. The tally was 125. One hundred and twenty-five votes to weaken key Clean Air and Clean Water Act; to make our drinking water less safe; and to weaken environmental standards in dozens of different ways. This is an appalling and dangerous environmental record.

And it should come as no surprise that this record of anti-environmental votes shows little concern for crafting well-analyzed policy that takes the views of all stakeholders into account.

Today, the House will begin consideration of the TRAIN Act, a bill whose passage will block actions to clean up smog, soot, and toxic air pollution from the nation’s power plants.

When this bill is considered, we will vote on amendments offered by Chairman Whitfield and Representative Latta. The Whitfield amendment will eviscerate the law’s ability to require

power plants to install modern pollution controls. The Latta amendment will reverse 40 years of clean air policy, allowing our national goals for clean air to be determined by corporate profits – not public health.

They will not agree that we need to have a hearing on the Latta amendment before reversing 40 years of success with the Clean Air Act. The Republicans will not clarify the bill on industrial boilers to prevent years and years of litigation and delay.

We should hear from states, industry, public health groups, clean air advocates, and other stakeholders before voting on these radical clean air amendments. These amendments are being considered through an egregiously flawed process -- a stark change from the way this Committee has traditionally handled important Clean Air Act legislation. We should at least understand what they do before voting on them.

And we're sitting here criticizing the EPA for all the work they put into their regulations before they issue them, and yet we're going to pass laws, at least pass it through the House, without a single moment of hearings just because some representatives want to and maybe the Republican party wants to respond to big business and forget about the safety and the well-being and the health of the American people.

Today's hearing will provide an opportunity to hear from the Administrator of the EPA, and I'm pleased to welcome Lisa Jackson. This is not the first time. I don't know how many times she's had to appear before this Committee. I don't think she has time to do all the dreadful things the Republicans are accusing her of doing if she's spending most of her time here to listen to complaints from the Republicans about regulations, some of which they haven't even proposed and the Republicans want to repeal it.

I will ask the Administrator about the Whitfield and Latta amendments and how dangerous they are to the American people. That will serve as some opportunity to examine these issues. And it will give us an opportunity to hear from the EPA Administrator about the impacts of the entire Republican anti-environment agenda.