

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup on H.R. 910, the “Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011”
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
March 10, 2011

Today, the Subcommittee considers legislation that codifies science denial.

Just two days ago, we heard from some of the world’s leading climate scientists. They told us that climate change is real ... that it is caused by humans ... and that the impacts could be devastating.

Their scientific conclusions are the same as those reached by the National Academy of Sciences and the premier scientific organizations of all the world’s major economies.

Not a single scientist agreed with Senator Inhofe and Republicans on this Committee that climate change is a hoax.

Yet today this Subcommittee considers legislation premised on Senator Inhofe’s belief.

H.R. 910 would rollback the Clean Air Act and block the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from regulating dangerous carbon emissions from power plants, oil refineries, and other large polluters.

This legislation overturns EPA’s scientific finding that carbon pollution endangers health and welfare. It repeals the greenhouse gas reporting rule. And it removes EPA’s authority to require energy efficiency at power plants and refineries.

It also has a host of other effects. I’d like to ask for unanimous consent to put in the record an analysis of this legislation.

In short, it is anti-science: a know-nothing, do-nothing approach to the most challenging environmental problem of our time.

We can't cure cancer by passing legislation that says smoking is harmless. And we can't stop climate change by declaring that carbon emissions are safe.

This bill won't stop carbon pollution from building up in the atmosphere. It won't address the public health threat facing American families. It won't stop the droughts and floods that threaten agriculture and displace families from their homes. It won't protect the air quality of our cities when summer temperatures soar to record levels. And it won't stop the strange weather patterns that have afflicted most of the nation.

What it will do, though, is gut the Clean Air Act and prevent EPA from addressing this enormous threat to public health and welfare. It is an echo of earlier eras, when powerful forces sought to repudiate Copernicus and Galileo and Darwin.

Some Republicans on the Committee will argue today that this bill is not a rejection of science. But if they believed in the serious threat posed by climate change, they would have accepted my offer to work together – without precondition – to develop a responsible plan for promoting clean energy and reducing carbon emissions.

Instead, they rebuffed my offer and are rushing this extreme bill through Committee.

It's hard to find common ground when one side doesn't accept there is a problem.

And it's hard to know how to respond when the other side doesn't seem to have any respect for the facts. Republicans call H.R. 910 the "Energy Tax Prevention Act," but EPA has no authority to levy taxes, nor does the agency propose to do so.

They claim that EPA is establishing a cap and trade program, but the agency has not proposed such a program and the agency officials have clearly said that they won't establish such a program.

And yesterday, Speaker Boehner argued that this legislation will stop gasoline prices from increasing. But it's laughable to assert that requiring new power plants and refineries to meet minimum efficiency standards is affecting prices at the pump.

History will not judge this Committee kindly if we become the last bastion of the polluter and the science-denier. When carbon emissions rise to record levels and our weather system goes haywire, the American people will ask why we acted so irresponsibly.

I hope we will be able to tell them that we stood up for science and public health and rejected this extreme proposal.