

Rep. Bryan Steil E&C Member Day Remarks

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for holding this hearing on priorities for the remainder of the 119th Congress. I appreciate the opportunity to highlight two issues that are critical to the state of Wisconsin.

First, I'm proud to sponsor H.R. 1394, the Codifying Useful Regulatory Definitions Act, also known as the CURD Act.

As America's Dairyland, Wisconsin's cheesemakers and processors are an important part of our state's economy and national food supply. Wisconsin is home to nearly 1,200 licensed cheesemakers and produces about 25 percent of the nation's cheese, across more than 600 types, styles, and varieties.

The CURD Act would amend the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to codify a clear definition of "natural cheese" based on long-established U.S. cheese-making standards. This definition would help consumers and industry clearly distinguish natural cheese from processed cheese.

Processed cheese is already defined in federal regulation, but "natural cheese" still appears without a clear definition. Providing this clarity ensures consumers know exactly what they are buying and gives cheesemakers consistent, predictable labeling standards.

The CURD Act was first considered by Congress in 2017, when it advanced in the Senate by unanimous consent. In the House, this nonpartisan, commonsense bill has been pending before the Energy and Commerce Committee since 2019.

During that time, it has received two legislative hearings without significant objection and has undergone four rounds of FDA technical assistance. The bill is also strongly supported by state and national dairy associations.

Given its record of bipartisan support and extensive vetting, I appreciate the Committee's attention to this legislation and encourage you to include the CURD Act during the next appropriate hearing opportunity and move it forward as soon as possible.

The second issue I want to highlight is the need to make targeted fixes to the Clean Air Act.

Right now, communities and manufacturers in Wisconsin are being punished for pollution that originates from outside of Wisconsin, including big cities like Chicago. That would be like holding a manufacturer in Bowling Green responsible for emissions from Memphis, or a manufacturer in Middlesex County responsible for emissions from Philadelphia.

That isn't right, and it's counterproductive if we're serious about strengthening American manufacturing and competing with China. Instead of focusing on the real sources of the problem, current law piles costly compliance requirements on communities that are already doing the right things.

Under the Clean Air Act, when an ozone nonattainment area misses its attainment deadline, it is automatically bumped up to a higher nonattainment classification. That reclassification triggers stricter permitting requirements and additional regulatory burdens, even when local sources are not the primary driver of the problem.

Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources has tried to work with the EPA to address this issue administratively. However, the EPA has emphasized that these automatic reclassifications are set by statute and that a durable solution will require congressional action.

In its current form, the Clean Air Act's reclassification process does not adequately account for interstate ozone transport.

I believe we can right-size regulations while continuing to reduce emissions and keeping our air clean. This can be achieved by making targeted reforms to the Clean Air Act to fully account for ozone transport.

I look forward to working with the Committee and with Administrator Zeldin to develop a practical, targeted solution that supports our workers and manufacturers while maintaining strong air quality protections.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on these two priorities.