

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton**  
**Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations**  
**Hearing on “EPA’s Regulatory Threat to Affordable, Reliable Energy:**  
**The Perspective of Coal Communities”**  
**October 29, 2013**

*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

“When the work underground stops, everything above pays the price.” That observation made by a Boone County, West Virginia, television reporter in September 2012 succinctly captures the plight of America’s coal communities. Over the past five years, as the nation has struggled to emerge from the great recession, we have witnessed an onslaught of EPA rules and proposals that have significantly targeted the nation’s energy and manufacturing sectors – the vitality of which is essential for putting this nation back on a path to long-term prosperity.

We have conducted a number of hearings looking closely at the regulatory proposals and what they add up to in terms of compliance costs, and ultimately the prospects for people to have access to the affordable energy and the goods and services they rely upon.

Nowhere have we seen the risks to prosperity more clearly than in the continued accumulation of regulations facing the coal sector of our economy – and our coal communities have suffered greatly.

Today we will hear important testimony that will provide the perspective of the communities that help provide Americans the benefits of this abundant resource and the electricity it produces.

The views of the local officials and workers provide a testament to the importance of coal, as a source of good, meaningful work, and as a support for the quality of life that all communities around the nation strive for. But the testimony also paints a troubling picture about the real damage that occurs when plants shutter, mines close, and people lose their jobs.

It shouldn’t have to be this way. I’ve been calling attention in recent months to the urgent need for ensuring this nation can embrace its energy abundance. This requires building the infrastructure and producing the fuels that provide power for our homes and for our commerce and manufacturing. This is only possible with a regulatory structure that encourages production of our diverse and abundant natural resources, including coal.

A great irony is that coal has done so much to ensure the affordable, reliable power for the majority of Americans for multiple generations – it has been a core fuel behind the great accomplishments of our manufacturing industry. And to a point underscored by the testimony today, coal has done much to lift so many out of poverty in this nation. Today’s hearing should remind us these accomplishments are at risk.

Coal should continue to provide this nation its tremendous benefits. It is a critical and important part of this nation’s future and a vital source of energy and jobs for millions of people in communities around the nation. Our work on this committee, through oversight of EPA and through our legislative initiatives, will help to make that happen. We are a nation of opportunity, and while others want to ban the use of coal, we will keep fighting to ensure coal remains an important part of our open, “all of the above” energy plan. I thank the witnesses for reminding us why this work is so important.

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