



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 22, 2017

CONTACT
[CJ Young](#) – (202) 225-5735

Pallone Slams Proposed Legislation to Weaken Clean Air Act

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) submitted the following remarks for the record at an Environment Subcommittee hearing titled, “H.R. 806, the Ozone Standards Implementation Act of 2017”, which would weaken Clean Air Act standards:*

H.R. 806 is essentially the same legislation the Committee considered in the last Congress, and the “Ozone Standards Implementation Act” is still a very misleading title. While the bill does derail the most recent ozone air quality standard, these bad policies go far beyond just ozone. Let’s be clear: H.R. 806 is a broad attack on the successful health based standards and protections for all criteria pollutants– carbon monoxide, particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxides, and even lead.

H.R. 806 is a compilation of misguided proposals that weaken or delay the protections in the law – strategies that won’t make air pollution magically go away. H.R. 806 puts the public health and safety of the American people at risk, and virtually guarantees that people living in areas with poor air quality will continue to breathe unhealthy air indefinitely.

We cannot consider this bill in isolation. It is only one of many assaults on public health and the environment being rolled out by the Trump Administration and the Republican Congress.

The Administration has announced its intention to roll back progress in climate change policy, energy efficiency, and clean energy. Great news for the fossil fuel industry, but not for public health, consumers, low income communities, or the U.S. industries and American workers that are poised to take us into a clean, low-carbon, and more efficient future. The Trump Administration’s actions will further speed global warming, encourage more fuel consumption, and generate more pollutants while costing us jobs in the clean energy sector.

The budget blueprint the Trump Administration released last week proposes to cut EPA’s budget by 31 percent -- \$2.6 billion dollars-- to reduce the EPA workforce by 3,200 people, and to eliminate 50 vital programs that protect the public health and environment. I should also note that a large portion of EPA’s funding goes directly to states to help ensure our

communities have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. These drastic cuts will be devastating to the people we represent.

Simultaneously, this bill explicitly says that no new funds can be provided to EPA and the states to do the numerous new tasks laid out in the legislation. So, although one of the stated justifications for this bill is to help states reduce air pollution, the fact is that it does exactly the opposite. The states need technical and financial support from their federal partner – the EPA-- to implement the Clean Air Act. The Trump Administration budget and this bill abandon that partnership, sending a clear message to the states to go it alone.

I do not believe the American people want more air and water pollution. Our constituents are not interested in breathing dirty air or drinking dirty water. They certainly don't want their health compromised by going back to ineffective, voluntary pollution control programs.

We have made great progress in reducing pollution and improving people's health. These air standards are based on decades of research, reviewed by experts in the health sciences who have advised the Administrator that protection of people's health requires lower ozone levels.

My Republican colleagues claim this bill does not increase air pollution or undermine the fundamental public health protections in the Clean Air Act. But that is exactly what will result if you stretch the deadlines for compliance, remove vital agency resources, and insert cost and other factors that have nothing to do with health.

Our experience with the Clean Air Act tells us that we do not have to choose between the health of our communities and a healthy economy. We can have both, and we have achieved both under the Clean Air Act.

I opposed this bill in the last Congress, and I continue to oppose it now. I will not go back on my commitment to the public to make the air safe and healthy to breathe. H.R. 806 breaks that commitment. The Clean Air Act provides EPA and the regulated community with sufficient flexibility to continue to improve air quality and public health. Instead of undermining the law and gutting the EPA, we should provide adequate resources to the Agency and to the states to continue to give every American clean, healthy air to breathe.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

###