

Opening Statement of the Honorable John Shimkus
Subcommittee on Environment
Markup on H.R. 1917; H.R. 453; H.R. 350; and H.R. 1119
November 15, 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

Good Morning and welcome to today's Subcommittee markup. I am pleased that we have begun the process of moving some commonsense bills that will help small businesses, car racing enthusiasts, and consumers. This Committee strives to make our nation's environmental regulations smarter and that is exactly what these 4 bills do.

Today we will be marking up 4 bills which were the subject of a legislative hearing on September 13th of this year. Two of these bills – H.R. 1917 and H.R. 1119 – passed this committee and on the House floor last Congress. The second two bills address concerns that have been brought to this committee's attention from industries that are being hampered by overburdensome regulation. Those bills have bipartisan support and I hope we are able to move them expeditiously.

H.R. 1917, the BRICK Act, and H.R. 453, which extends New Source Performance Standards deadlines for residential wood heaters, both provide relief to small businesses and both enjoy bipartisan support. These bills help businesses who are being held back by the significant compliance costs imposed by environmental regulations, resulting in the loss of jobs and a damaged economy.

H.R. 1119, the SENSE Act, addresses facilities that take coal refuse and turn it into electricity and harmless ash. The ash can then be used to remediate the sites formerly contaminated by coal refuse piles. The bill before us simply allows for an alternative compliance method under the Mercury Air Toxics or MATS rule. Our amendment in the nature of a substitute for this bill addresses the concerns raised about this bill last Congress.

As I mentioned at the hearing in September, HR 350, the RPM Act, seeks to clarify longstanding policy on vehicles modified exclusively for competition on racetracks. Never in the 47 year history of the Clean Air Act has the agency enforced the anti-tampering provisions against vehicles that are taken off public roads and driven exclusively on raceways, but in 2015 the agency inserted language into an unrelated proposed rule suggesting a change in policy. While the EPA later retracted that language, it did so in a manner that left unclear the legal status of the owners of these cars and motorcycles as well as the businesses that serve them. The RPM Act would remove that cloud and make it clear that the agency's hands-off policy is indeed the law.

All of these bills provide the necessary leeway and flexibility to smaller entities so that they can meet the requirements of the clean air act without experiencing needless regulatory burdens. For this reason, it is imperative that we report these bills today so we can help the many small businesses throughout the country that are being threatened by unreasonable regulations.