

**Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden**  
**Subcommittee on Environment**  
**Markup of H.R. 1917; H.R.453; H.R. 350; and H.R. 1119**  
**November 15, 2017**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

I come from a district back in Oregon comprised of many rural communities where small businesses are most often the core of local economies and the primary job creators. As a result, my constituents are significantly affected when federal regulators impose high costs on small businesses.

I believe that the EPA has on occasion failed to consider the interests of the “little guy” when regulating sectors mainly consisting of small manufacturers and other small businesses, which has resulted in policies that do more economic harm than environmental good, and that place undue burdens on consumers.

Today we are considering four bills that make commonsense adjustments to preserve small businesses and jobs while still maintaining important protections to the environment. These bills address the impact of regulations and policies aimed at brick makers, coal refuse-to-energy plants, the amateur racing industry, and, of particular importance to many in rural Oregon, wood stoves.

In many parts of Oregon, we’re surrounded by forests and wood stoves are the most economical way to heat a home or a ranch shop. But Oregonians in these areas know all too well how expensive burdensome regulations can be. Areas like Lakeview and Klamath Falls have found themselves facing no good option between risking air quality restrictions that could prohibit economic growth, or forcing residents to purchase expensive new wood stoves that meet new regulations. These communities ended up spending \$1.5 million to help consumers afford new stoves.

Some argue that Congress has no role modifying EPA rules, and that we should simply wait it out while legal challenges work their way through

the courts or while EPA completes its reconsideration process of these policies. With respect to the issues and legislation being addressed today, I disagree. After all, it was Congress that delegated to EPA its authority under the Clean Air Act, and Congress has the right and the duty to step in when we see this authority being misused in ways that threaten small businesses and jobs. Furthermore, time is short and there is no guarantee that either the courts or the agency will act soon enough to prevent plant closures and pink slips.

Some have claimed that these bills represent a rollback of environmental and public health protections, but we need to maintain a sense of perspective. For one thing, none of the four sectors at issue are a significant source of emissions. For example, coal refuse-to-energy plants represent about one half of one percent of the nation's coal-fired capacity, and vehicles modified to be used exclusively for competition are an even smaller fraction of the 250 million vehicles owned by Americans. Additionally, many of these businesses face other measures that restrict emissions. The brick industry has already reduced emissions by nearly 95 percent according to a study by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Perhaps most importantly, none of these bills repeal any regulation - they simply make targeted adjustments in order to reduce the risk of plant shutdowns and layoffs.

I conclude by noting that EPA recently updated its air quality trends to include the 2016 data, and the news is very good. Air pollution continues to decline, and that includes nearly all the emissions at issue today. The data shows that there is no environmental justification for inflicting economic harm on small businesses and the communities where they are located, and thus there is every reason to pass these bills to ensure that any such harm is avoided.