

**Chair Bill Johnson**  
**Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials:**  
**“Protecting American Manufacturing: Examining EPA’s Proposed PM<sub>2.5</sub> Rule.”**  
**September 19, 2023**  
*As prepared for delivery*

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today for this important hearing on “Protecting American Manufacturing: Examining EPA’s Proposed PM 2.5 Rule.”

For the health of our constituents, the environment, and the economy, it is vital that the EPA set balanced standards for air quality.

The EPA has a long history of regulating fine particulate matter, referred to as PM 2.5, under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards or NAAQS (knacks).

The Clean Air Act directs the EPA to review these standards every five years, and the last review of PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards was completed in 2020.

However, the Biden EPA decided to reconsider the PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards just six months after the previous review was finalized – a discretionary decision that will have significant negative impacts across the entire country.

In January of this year, EPA announced a proposal to lower annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> primary standards from the current 12 micrograms per cubic meter to somewhere in the range of 9 to 10 micrograms per cubic meter.

Now, this doesn’t sound like very much...but as I’ll explain in a minute, this can have drastic negative effects that would stifle manufacturing in our country, and run counter to an administration that *claims* to have an industrial policy.

Even worse, the EPA is considering dropping the standard to as low as 8 micrograms per cubic meter, a level that is approaching natural background levels in many areas of the nation. To my colleagues of both sides...this is **not** what the Clean Air Act was designed to do.

Lowering the standard to 8 or 9 micrograms per cubic meter would put 100s of counties in economically active areas around the nation into nonattainment. And a standard of 10 is not much better.

Ultimately, EPA’s proposal locks these areas into a host of compliance obligations and oversight that extends years, even if they come back into compliance.

What is more troubling, and a central reason why this Administration should **reuse** its discretion and go back to the drawing board – is that vast regions of the nation will be so close to nonattainment, that they will be unable to permit new and expanded manufacturing and other industrial activities.

The map behind me, from the EPA docket and testimony this morning, shows the problem: virtually every economically active area of the nation, would be negatively impacted by these proposed standards.

Friends, we've heard from hog Republicans and Democrats about the importance of securing our supply chains and re-shoring manufacturing...I thought that's what we want to do. But, **this** won't get us there.

When manufacturers seek permits to build and operate, they'll have to show their modeled emissions won't tip an area into non-compliance...

As this map shows, vast areas of the nation would risk tipping into noncompliance.

The National Association of Manufacturers commissioned a study, which indicated that lowering PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards to 8 could threaten \$87.4 billion in economic activity per year.

The study also showed that lowering the PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard would lead to the loss of over 300,000 manufacturing jobs annually.

The harmful economic impacts of EPA's proposal is staggering, not just for manufacturing, but for all sectors of the economy from energy to agriculture to transportation.

Today we'll hear from a panel that can help the Committee understand the impacts of implementing these proposed standards.

Bryce Bird, the State Air Director for Utah, would be responsible for implementing EPA's standards.

And state air regulators are critical to implementing EPA's standards...so, Mr. Bird's perspective on the practical challenges states will face to design regulatory and permitting programs, and the impacts of lower standards — like problems mitigating wildfires — will be critical to our examination today.

I'd also like to welcome Glenn Hamer, who's involved in business development in Texas and can provide a regional economic perspective. And Tim Hunt will help us understand what industries will confront as they seek the permits to operate.

And finally, I'd like to welcome Almeta Cooper, of Moms Clean Air Force, to share her perspective today with us as well.

It's critical that our hearing today uncover the real-world impacts of EPA's proposed discretionary tightening of PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards. We have a very knowledgeable panel, and I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses.

In closing, let me emphasize that the United States has decreased PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions by 42 percent over the past 20 years.

We can and will continue to decrease air emissions, but we cannot do so under overly burdensome regulations that are impossible to implement.

I yield back.