

Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers
**Opening Statement – Subcommittee on Environment,
Manufacturing, and Critical Materials:**
**Markup of a Committee Print titled, “Ambient Air Quality
Standards Implementation Act of 2024”**
March 6, 2024
As prepared for delivery

For decades, America has been the number one place to do business, while maintaining some of the best air quality in the world.

We have achieved this success in part through laws that enable—not disable—the productive capacity of Americans, their communities, and the industries that support them.

Unfortunately, that prosperity...

...that opportunity to work and thrive, is being threatened as the Biden administration advances radical environmental policies that will crush the American economy.

The Biden EPA’s new standard for fine particulate matter—or “PM 2.5, for instance...

... will devastate American manufacturing—which we rely upon to improve people’s livelihoods and our economic leadership.

These efforts undermine American economic activity—which directly harms public health and welfare.

And the rules fail to address primary sources of particulate pollution, like wildfires.

The new rule goes well beyond the congressional intent expressed in the Clean Air Act to promote reasonable actions to limit or reduce emissions and pollution.

Its harm would extend to nearly every sector of our economy. In addition to manufacturing, the rule would hurt power generation, agriculture, construction, and forestry...

It jeopardizes hundreds of billions of dollars in U.S. economic activity and millions of jobs...

... making it nearly impossible to build new manufacturing facilities.

It would make efforts to secure our supply chains and reduce our dependence on countries like China significantly harder.

By all measures, the nation’s air quality has improved dramatically since the Clean Air Act was enacted and the current standards are improving quality even more.

The EPA itself has already concluded that the current standards are protective of public health and has reported that total emissions of criteria air pollutants have dropped 73 percent since 1980.

The data is clear. U.S. air quality is the best in the world and only getting better.

Despite this progress, the Biden EPA is taking steps to introduce these new standards that are completely divorced from reality to appease his radical base.

Instead of more harmful regulations, what we need are reasonable solutions that appropriately balance protecting our public health...

...while ensuring America continues to maintain its economic leadership.

That's the approach we've taken for decades... and it's worked.

As air quality improves, Clean Air Act provisions that were established decades ago when air quality was much worse, are now becoming counterproductive.

As new air quality standards get closer to natural background levels, there's less room for industry to acquire necessary permits or further cut their emissions.

We must update air quality standards responsibly in a way that reflects the reality of today and what states and communities can actually achieve.

We cannot allow outdated requirements to be weaponized against U.S. economic prosperity and the interests of Americans.

Today, we will markup the Air Quality Standards Implementation Act of 2024.

This legislation ensures efficient, effective implementation of air quality standards for states, which are responsible for meeting public health goals.

The legislation will ensure that measures to implement health protections are realistic and balanced in their approach.

It will enact reasonable requirements that states can actually implement.

It will provide the time necessary for states—and the EPA—to implement existing standards and to review and develop workable future standards that keep with the goals of the Clean Air Act.

The legislation will also ensure regulators follow the law when considering how to promote healthy communities and take into account factors like adverse public health, welfare, social, economic, and energy impacts.

It will make it easier to reduce wildfire risk—something that is especially important for my home state of Washington...

...and provide time to implement the new particulate matter standards in a way that will help reduce the worst economic harms of the Biden Administration's policies.

We must update air quality standards responsibly in a way that reflects reality.

This discussion draft will ensure that measures to implement health protections are realistic and balanced in their approach.

Protecting public health and our economy are not mutually exclusive goals, but to achieve this requires that we rethink how to address pollution levels that are outside our control.

The legislation is essential to achieving both of these goals, and should be bipartisan.

I look forward to the discussion to advance this bill to the full committee and I yield back.

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