

Chairman Brett Guthrie
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Environment
“Short-Circuiting Progress: How the Clean Air Act Impacts
Building Necessary Infrastructure for Onshoring American
Innovation”
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Thank you, Chairman Griffith, and thank you to our witnesses for joining us for today’s hearing, which begins the Committee’s effort to review and modernize the Clean Air Act.

We are continuing our important work, finding common-sense solutions to reduce unreasonable regulatory burdens while continuing to protect our environment.

Unfortunately, over the last four years, the onslaught of Biden-Harris Administration regulations under the Clean Air Act created significant regulatory burdens for the American electric power, manufacturing, and transportation sectors.

We were recently reminded of this when we held a full committee hearing on artificial intelligence and heard testimony about the critical need to support and accelerate AI technologies.

In that hearing, industry experts repeated the same concerns many of us have heard from small businesses and manufacturers: the overall regulatory environment, and permitting processes in particular, are overburdensome and inefficient here in the U.S.

As we will hear today, the economic impact of harmful regulatory burdens promulgated during the Biden-Harris Administration totaled nearly \$1.8 trillion, a historical record.

Amazingly, more than 70 percent of that cost was imposed by the EPA, much of it from Clean Air Act rules.

The last time Congress meaningfully amended the Clean Air Act was 1990, 35 years ago. We’ve learned a lot – and seen a lot of environmental progress – since then.

In the decades since Congress first passed the Clean Air Act, air quality in the United States has dramatically improved.

Criteria air pollutants are down 73 percent since 1980. According to the World Health Organization, the U.S. has some of the lowest fine particulate matter levels in the world.

The progress we have seen does not mean the Clean Air Act cannot be reviewed and modernized. Some of the Clean Air Act's provisions are unclear, outdated, and do not reflect the world we live in today.

This trend is illustrated by the Biden-Harris National Ambient Air Quality Standards, or NAAQS [NACKs], for particulate matter, a prime example of the need for reforming and updating the flawed system used for setting and reviewing Clean Air Act regulations.

The Biden rule will force large portions of the country into "non-attainment" status, which will block new development, halt modernization, and stunt job growth.

In their testimony in April, witnesses in our AI hearing pointed to the particulate matter rule as a significant barrier when they look to onshore American innovation. They noted that as currently implemented, the rule would limit opportunities for American manufacturing.

These overly restrictive air regulations oppress domestic investments in semiconductor plants and data centers, jeopardizing America's ability to compete in the global AI race.

On top of the unreasonable compliance costs and complexity, these regulations also fail to fulfill the purpose of the Clean Air Act. A majority of emissions measured in NAAQS are from sources outside of a manufacturers' control.

American industry propelled the innovation that made our air cleaner, yet they are being penalized for factors unrelated to their operation.

A few weeks ago, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin testified before this subcommittee about his efforts to address the significant regulatory burdens promulgated during the Biden-Harris Administration that oppressed economic development, without spurring meaningful improvements to environmental protection.

Now it's our turn to do the same.

The discussion drafts before us today are based on legislation considered by this Committee in previous Congresses and offer common-sense, practical solutions to remedy significant flaws in the current NAAQS process.

The panel of witnesses is uniquely well-qualified to discuss the complicated nature of the NAAQS program and its need for reform.

I thank Congressmen Allen and Congressmen Carter for their leadership on these bills, and I look forward to working with the rest of the members on the Committee as we consider additional proposals on how to best modernize the Clean Air Act.

I look forward to today's discussion and yield back.