



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Media Contacts: Heather Vaughan, Bridget Dunn
(202) 225-6371

Statement by Chairman Ralph Abraham (R-La.)

Examining the Underlying Science and Impacts of Glider Truck Regulations

Chairman Abraham: Good morning and welcome to today's joint Environment and Oversight Subcommittee hearing about glider trucks, also referred to as glider kits. A glider kit is a tractor chassis frame, front axle, cab, and brakes, assembled with a remanufactured engine, transmission, and rear axle. According to media reports and industry experts, gliders cost 25% less than a brand new rig.

The purpose of today's hearing is twofold. We will examine the economic effects of an Obama Administration greenhouse gas emissions regulation which, among other things, proposed to cap production of glider trucks. We will also address the integrity of a study on glider truck emissions conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory (NVFEL) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Documents provided through FOIA and Committee requests raise serious questions about the impartiality of the 2017 EPA study.

Historically, the Science Committee has worked hard to ensure that when regulations are necessary, they are based on sound science. Under Chairman Smith, the Committee has also worked to level the playing field and ensure that EPA treats all parties fairly. In the case of glider trucks, there are red flags surrounding the NVFEL study.

The Committee obtained emails showing that one particular manufacturer had an inside track to EPA and, in fact, provided the glider trucks – trucks they did not manufacture – to EPA for testing. I will get into the details of the EPA study more during my questions, but from the outset this conflict of interest raises questions about the study's credibility.

Relying on a flawed study in this case is particularly alarming since the proposed regulation will have dire consequences for the glider truck industry. Thousands of independent truckers – all small businesses – across America rely on glider trucks as an affordable option for their trucking operation. In my district alone there are 883 independent truckers, many of whom drive gliders. For me, this is a jobs issue. We should not allow the heavy hand of the federal government to come down and crush an entire industry, especially absent a rock solid scientific reason for doing so, which appears to be lacking in this case.

In addition to the individual truckers, the manufacturers of glider kits would be put out of business – killing even more jobs.

At the request of many of my colleagues, the EPA Inspector General has agreed to review the propriety of the study and we look forward to the results of his review. We have joining us as witnesses today experts on regulatory law. I look forward to hearing their testimony.

I want to briefly address the regulatory steps EPA has taken in this instance and assure everyone that contrary to the picture painted by the media in headlines, such as “Scott Pruitt Gave Dirty Glider Trucks a Gift on his Last Day at EPA,” or ““Super Polluting Trucks Receive Loophole on Pruitt’s Last Day” – EPA does not appear to have done anything out of the ordinary in this case. According to administrative law experts, agencies routinely take the similar steps EPA took with regard to glider trucks. Agencies have broad discretion about what regulations to enforce.

What actually was out of the ordinary was the Obama Administration’s failure to conduct a study on glider truck emissions prior to proposing the Phase Two greenhouse gas rule. More work needs to be done to understand the impact of gliders on the environment. Many experts argue that using remanufactured parts over the lifetime of the truck actually has a positive environmental impact. I look forward to hearing our witnesses’ opinions on the environmental issue. More work is needed in this area – we cannot simply rely on EPA’s study in this instance.

Thank you again to our witnesses and audience for being with us today. I yield back.

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