

**Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Opening Statement**  
**Subcommittee Hearing on Administration's "Clear Skies" Bill**  
**July 8, 2003**

Today's hearing considers the Bush Administration's proposal to weaken the Clean Air Act.

We still face serious air pollution problems. 133 million Americans breathe unhealthy air, acid rain and haze are harming our parks, and we've yet to tackle global warming.

While we've made progress on air pollution over the past 30 years, it's *because* Congress adopted a tough Clean Air Act for EPA and the states to carry out. But the Administration bill would repeal, delay, or gut many existing Clean Air Act requirements, allowing more pollution for years longer than current law requires.

For example, under the Clean Air Act, areas must meet the health-based standard for particulate matter by 2009. The Bush bill slips the 2009 deadline until 2015. If the area isn't clean by 2015, it has until 2020 to come up with a plan. And the plan doesn't even have to aim for healthy air until 2022. That is *thirteen years* after the current deadline. A whole generation of children would suffer harmful air pollution.

Similarly, the Clean Air Act requires power plants to control their toxic air pollution by late 2007. The Bush bill repeals this requirement, providing only some mercury reductions by 2010 and 2018.

The Bush bill also guts current protections for downwind states, repeals the new source review requirements for power plants, and eliminates protections for parks and wilderness areas unless a power plant is virtually next door.

Mr. Holmstead is going to argue that the Administration's proposal will reduce emissions more than under the Clean Air Act, at least for a little while. But when it comes right down to it, Mr. Holmstead is really saying "Trust us." Here as elsewhere, the White House refuses to release the basic technical information necessary to evaluate its claims.

Just last week, the *Washington Post* reported that the Bush Administration is withholding critical information related to this bill.

*[Show poster of headline: "EPA Withholds Air Pollution Analysis"]*

The Administration refused to release benefits estimates for Senator Carper's bill showing it is more effective than Clear Skies. They played the same game with Senator Jefford's Clean Power bill.

And now they are manipulating information on mercury. Months ago, EPA promised to model the mercury reductions that could be achieved under the upcoming mercury rule mandated by the Clean Air Act. Then EPA abruptly cancelled the modeling. I asked EPA for this analysis over six weeks ago, but haven't received it.

If "Clear Skies" really was better for air quality, it wouldn't have to delay the clean air deadlines. If Clear Skies really addressed pollution transport, it wouldn't have to remove backstop provisions protecting downwind states. If Clear Skies really achieved greater mercury reductions, the Administration would release modeling for the mercury rule. If Clear Skies really was the superior policy choice, the Administration would give Congress analyses of competing proposals.

The Administration calls this the "Clear Skies Act." That's good marketing. But the reality is that this bill is terrible for air quality and should be opposed by every member of this Committee.