

Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield
Subcommittee on Energy and Power and Subcommittee on
Environment and the Economy
Joint Hearing on "The FY 2013 EPA Budget"
February 28, 2012

I am greatly concerned about the President's FY 2013 \$3.7 trillion dollar budget request and the damage that this irresponsible level of spending will do to our economy.

But today we are focusing specifically on one part of this budget request, the 8.3 billion dollars requested for the Environmental Protection Agency.

While this is only a part of the overall budget, I am especially worried about what this money would be used for. I believe EPA's budget request reflects an agency that has moved far from its core missions and statutory authorities purpose and that is now delving into areas for which it has no business.

For example, I do not believe that even one penny of the people's money should be spent in the agency's war on coal. Now, let me be clear, I am all for reasonable EPA regulations to control emissions from coal-fired power plants as spelled out in the Clean Air Act. But what we have seen in the last few years goes well beyond what EPA is supposed to be doing, and constitutes an effort to force this nation away from coal by imposing an avalanche of regulations that are technologically and economically impossible to meet. These regulations will most certainly drive up electricity rates and cause massive unemployment.

Last summer, EPA issued the costly Cross-State Air Pollution Rule. Most recently, the agency rolled out its Utility MACT regulations, and will soon release its New Source Performance Standards for greenhouse gases from coal-fired generation. This comes on top of other regulations that have not only brought construction of new coal-fired power plants to a near standstill, but have led to a growing list of announced retirements of existing plants. I recently led a letter with 220 other Members of Congress asking the EPA to halt their greenhouse gas standards so that we can provide certainty in the electricity markets and stop these retirements.

Let me state the obvious – the Environmental Protection Agency does not have authority to set energy policy, and should not be in the business of deciding which energy sources this nation can and cannot use. This effort is part of an expansive global warming agenda that Congress never authorized and never intended. I might add that Congress has in fact rejected the regulation of carbon on three separate occasions.

Another example of EPA mission creep and abuse of discretion can be seen with the rise in spending for grants going to other countries. Whether the millions spent on programs like "Breathe Easy Jakarta" actually does any good is highly debatable, but what is not debatable is that the agency shouldn't be spending taxpayer dollars on such foreign efforts.

Yet, while EPA has greatly increased its foreign grants in recent years, the agency apparently isn't using enough resources to have answers to many of my subcommittee's questions, such as the total estimated cost of the Utility MACT rule. This raises questions about prioritization that also need to be explored.

In any event, I look forward to a discussion of the EPA's budget request with an eye toward returning the agency to what I believe is its legitimate role.

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