

Statement of Chairman Whitfield
Subcommittee on Energy and Power Markup on
H.R. 910, the Energy Tax Prevention Act
March 10, 2011
***** As Prepared for Delivery *****

The American people made clear last Fall that they wanted a real change in Washington's direction and in its priorities. It is hard to think of a better place to fulfill this mandate than stopping EPA's global warming regulations by passing HR 910, the Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011.

In 2009, with the economy in a recession and unemployment high, Congress embarked on an effort to pass a costly cap and trade legislation designed to address global warming.

This legislation was equivalent to a tax on the coal, oil, and natural gas that provides the nation with nearly 70 percent of its energy. Numerous analyses found that cap and trade would have boosted electric bills, gasoline prices, and potentially destroyed millions of jobs.

Fortunately, cap and trade never became law.

Rather than accept this verdict and shift focus to the business of getting America's economy back on track, the Obama Administration is moving forward with EPA regulations that would do the same thing as the cap and trade bill that we know from previous testimony will increase fuel prices, both electricity and gasoline.

In two hearings before my Energy and Power subcommittee on the Energy Tax Prevention Act and the economic impacts of EPA's agenda, we heard from representatives of many job creating industries – manufacturers, energy producers, small businesses, farmers, and others. All raised concerns about job losses should EPA's global warming regulations move forward.

We heard from both coal-using utilities and manufacturers as well as the coal industry itself. That these regulations seek to curtail domestic coal mining and usage is of particular concern to me. I consider these regulations to be a major part of the administration's larger war on coal.

One economic expert estimated job losses potentially reaching 1.4 million under EPA's regulatory scheme.

It is difficult to predict the economic damage with any precision, since the agency is unwilling to say how many global warming regulations it will issue and what they will entail. Representatives of many job creating industries noted that this uncertainty is already having a chilling effect on investment and job creation.

EPA's regulations put American businesses at an unfair disadvantage. Not only will we lose manufacturing jobs to nations like China that have no similar constraints on their own industries, but we will be outsourcing emissions as well – all economic pain for no environmental gain.

The depth and breadth of opposition to EPA's regulations is reflected in the widespread support for HR 910 among organizations representing literally tens of millions of jobs. This includes the National Association of Manufacturers, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Farm Bureau Federation, National Mining Association, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Petrochemical and Refiners Association, and the National Association of Realtors.

As if we needed another reason to block EPA's regulatory overreach, the rise in gasoline prices has provided it. The public doesn't like high prices, but they really get steamed when they learn that their government is part of the problem.

EPA's regulations would add more red tape to domestic oil drilling while also raising refining costs – lower supplies and thus higher prices for crude as well as increased costs of turning that crude into refined products like gasoline and diesel fuel.

A third hearing focused on the science of global warming. While there was a vigorous debate at this hearing whether global warming is a serious threat or not, it was clear from the comments of the scientists present that EPA's regulatory agenda is not a solution to it.

To repeat - HR 910 is not about whether the science shows global warming to be a problem, it is about whether EPA's regulations are sensible. Our hearings brought out the fact that they are not.

Weeks ago, we released a discussion draft and entertained all constructive suggestions. We believe we have crafted a bill that stops EPA's damaging global warming regulations and is worthy of support.

I yield back my time and urge all Members to join with me in supporting this bill. I now recognize Mr. Rush for five minutes.