

Let the EPA Do Its Job To Protect Our Health

Senators Should Vote Against Amendments that Halt Agency's Efforts to Reduce Air Pollution

The Center for American Progress Action Fund urges a “no” vote on the Baucus Amendment # 236, Stabenow Amendment # 277, Rockefeller amendment # 215, and McConnell amendment # 183, which were offered to the SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act of 2011, S. 493. Each of these amendments will halt the Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to clean up health-threatening carbon dioxide pollution under the Clean Air Act as decided by the Supreme Court.

The Senate should oppose efforts to block protection of public health from threats posed by carbon dioxide pollution. Preventing the EPA from doing its job will risk the health of children, seniors, and those suffering from respiratory ailments. These amendments would also discourage investments in innovative clean energy technologies.

- The public believes the EPA should do more, not less, to support the Clean Air Act. A February 2011 [bipartisan poll](#) found that “69 percent think the EPA should update Clean Air Act standards with *stricter limits* on air pollution.” Unions and more than 500 nongovernmental organizations [oppose](#) this antipublic health proposal.
- Delaying or eliminating the EPA's authority to clean up carbon dioxide pollution will harm our health, which is why similar amendments restricting EPA authority were opposed by the major [public health protection organizations](#), including the American Lung Association, American Public Health Association, and many others. The American Medical Association recently wrote:

Patients are presenting with illnesses that once happened only in warmer areas. Chronic conditions are becoming aggravated by more frequent and extended heat waves. Allergy and asthma seasons are getting longer. Spates of injuries are resulting from more intense ice storms and snowstorms.
- The [Clean Air Act](#) has protected thousands of lives and has generated real benefit to the economy. For every \$1 of pollution reduction costs, we have seen an economic benefit of \$20.
- Halting the EPA's efforts will increase smog by failing to address a key contributor to global warming. [2010 was the hottest year on record](#), following the [hottest decade on record](#), which is part of a 50-year trend. Uncontrolled large coal-fired power plants and oil refineries will add to the carbon dioxide pollution responsible for this warming. And warm temperatures are a key ingredient in smog formation. An interim assessment by the [EPA](#) found that there is “the potential for global climate change to make U.S. air quality management more difficult.”

- The EPA's efforts to reduce carbon dioxide pollution will create jobs and boost innovation, which is why utility leaders from Exelon Corp., Constellation Energy Group, Calpine Corp, and PG&E, among others, oppose congressional efforts to delay Clean Air Act implementation. These business leaders [wrote that](#):

[E]xperience complying with air quality regulations demonstrates that regulations can yield important economic benefits, including job creation, while maintaining reliability.

Senators should vote against the Baucus (#236), Stabenow (#277), Rockefeller (#215), and McConnell (#183) amendments, and instead allow the Environmental Protection Agency to continue to fulfill its responsibility to protect public health from carbon dioxide and other air pollutants.