



COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRATS
ENERGY & COMMERCE
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

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**Statement of Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr., as prepared for delivery
Floor Consideration of “H.R. 2042, The Ratepayer Protection Act”**

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation. The bill before us is dangerous, unnecessary, and premature. It undermines the cornerstone of the administration’s plan to tackle unchecked climate change, and the President has made clear that he will veto this legislation.

Yesterday we passed a bipartisan bill amending the Toxic Substances Control Act. That is the type of legislation that we should be spending our time on, not messaging bills aimed at gutting draft EPA rules.

As we sit here today, climate change continues to reshape our world. According to NOAA, 2014 was the warmest year ever recorded, and nine of the ten hottest years have occurred since 2000. And that trend shows no sign of slowing down.

We know this warming is due to carbon pollution from fossil fuels accumulating in the atmosphere, trapping more heat, and changing our climate.

Last week the Pope highlighted our world-wide moral obligation to address climate change. This week, EPA released a report which confirms what many in the country are already experiencing: that failing to address climate change will have enormous financial costs. Just look at the sky-rocketing costs of fighting wildfires, the mounting costs to farmers of losing their crops and cattle to more frequent and severe droughts, the enormous costs of rebuilding infrastructure swept away by more intense storms or threatened by steadily rising seas. Ignoring these costs won’t make them go away, and the longer we wait to act, the more we allow the risks to compound and accumulate, the more costly we will be to solve the problem.

In fact, the projected costs of climate change impacts dwarf any projected short-term costs associated with transitioning to a clean energy economy, which is happening already.

EPA has proposed a workable plan to reduce emissions of carbon pollution from power plants, which are the largest uncontrolled source of man-made greenhouse gases in the U.S. The Clean Power Plan outlines a path to cleaner air, better health, a safer climate and a stronger economy. The proposed rule also gives states flexibility to choose how to achieve their emission reduction goals, which are state-specific and cost-effective. This is a moderate and reasonable

approach, and falls well within the legal authority – and responsibility – of the EPA to address carbon pollution from power plants.

This bill we are considering today would dismiss all of this progress, and would cripple the efforts of the EPA to move forward in the fight against climate change. Effectively, this bill would amend the Clean Air Act in a harmful and dangerous fashion.

This bill establishes an unprecedented extension for every Clean Power Plan deadline until all litigation is concluded. This blanket extension would be given to all polluters, incentivizing opponents of the rule to “run the clock” on frivolous litigation, simply to put off having to reduce their carbon emissions.

The bill also allows a governor to say “the requirements of the Clean Power Plan don’t apply to me.” Under the bill, a governor can opt-out of a federal plan – giving certain states a free ride to pollute without any consequences. It is one thing to encourage states to “just say no,” but to let a governor declare that his state is not subject to the federal Clean Air Act at all? That goes too far.

As I have said before, EPA’s proposed Clean Power Plan is both modest and flexible, and will help us tackle the urgent need to reduce our carbon emissions. Just saying no – as this bill would have us do—and condemning future generations is simply not an option. I strongly oppose this bill and urge a no vote.

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