

**Opening Statement of the Honorable John Shimkus
Subcommittees on Energy and Power and Environment and the Economy
Hearing on “The Fiscal Year 2016 EPA Budget”
February 25, 2015**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

I thank Chairman Whitfield for recognizing me and I, too, want to welcome the Administrator once again to our hearing here today.

I appreciate the Administrators willingness to work productively with us in the past on issues such as creating a legal framework for electronic submission of hazardous waste manifests. We again look forward to collaborating with you as we work to enact coal ash legislation and a bill to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act.

For me, today's hearing is not just an administrative exercise where we do bean counting. While we don't write the checks the Agency cashes, most of the major legal authority that underpins the work delegated to the Agency rests within this Committee. Today's hearing gives us a chance to compare the agency's the individual budget requests with EPA's underlying statutory authorities.

As a legislator, I have many questions where I think more information is needed to evaluate how statutory mandates are being carried out.

For example, I have questions about the statutory nexus with the following budget requests and policies they are implementing:

1. The Clean Power Plan,
2. The Climate Ready Water Utilities program, and
3. Regulations under the Clean Air Act implementing Executive Order 13650

Legal authority aside, we know these regulations can become complicated to implement with unclear guidance, adding unnecessary costs to the regulated industries and ultimately to the consumer. This chart shows just how cumbersome EPA's proposed clean power plan is just by itself. If this plan puts reliable base load energy from sources such as coal and nuclear in danger, communities may face higher costs and potentially suffer brown outs when most in need. We have to ask ourselves if this path leads to the energy future Americans expect. I believe there is a better way, and that we can find solutions to these challenges without placing the burden on the backs of consumers or by sacrificing power plants that provide good paying jobs to families across the country.

I also have questions about funding and pace of activity on chemicals under the Toxic Substances Control Act, specifically on the Agency's transparency concerning prioritizing and setting policy choices. These areas will be particularly important as we look to work across the aisle on both side of the Capitol to update this law.

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