



# THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

## INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

June 26, 2012

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Energy and Power

FROM: Committee Staff

RE: Hearing on "The American Energy Initiative"

On Thursday, June 28, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. in room 2123 of the Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee on Energy and Power will hold the twenty-first day of its hearing on "The American Energy Initiative." This day of the hearing will focus on EPA's proposal to revise the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for particulate matter.

### I. WITNESSES

#### Panel 1

**Anne E. Smith, Ph.D.**  
Senior Vice President  
NERA Economic Consulting

**Jeffrey R. Holmstead**  
Partner  
Bracewell & Giuliani

**Dr. Tee Lamont Guidotti, M.D., M.P.H.**  
Medical Advisory Services, Inc.

**Peter A. Valberg, Ph.D.**  
Principal, Environmental Health  
Gradient Corporation

**Bradford Muller**  
Vice President, Marketing  
Charlotte Pipe and Foundry Company

**Collin P. O'Mara**  
Secretary  
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and  
Environmental Control

Additional witnesses to be announced.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

Under the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter. Particulate matter (PM) is a complex mixture of extremely small particles that can be directly emitted from sources such as forest fires, or form when gases react in the air. On June 15, 2012, EPA announced a proposal to revise the NAAQS for PM. The revisions would tighten the annual health-based primary standard and establish a separate welfare-based secondary standard.

EPA initially established PM NAAQS standards in 1971, and subsequently reviewed and revised those standards in 1987, 1997 and 2006. These NAAQS include standards for “fine” particulate matter, which includes particles 2.5 micrometers in diameter or smaller, known as “PM2.5.”

### **A. Health-based “Primary” Particulate Matter Standards**

EPA has established health-based “primary” PM2.5 standards for both annual and 24-hour averaging times to protect the public health with an adequate margin of safety. The primary 24-hour PM2.5 standard was last revised in 2006, from a level of 65 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) to 35  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The primary annual standard has, since 1997, been set at a level of 15  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The annual primary standard was retained in the agency’s 2006 review of the standards.

### **B. Welfare-based “Secondary” Particulate Matter Standards**

EPA has also established welfare-based “secondary” PM2.5 standards to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects associated with the presence of the pollutant in the ambient air. Welfare effects include effects on soils, water, crops, vegetation, man-made materials, animals, wildlife, weather, visibility and climate, damage to and deterioration of property, and hazards to transportation, as well as effects on economic values and on personal comfort and well-being. The EPA has in all previous reviews revised the PM2.5 secondary standards by making them identical in all respects to the primary standards.

### **C. Proposed Revisions to the Standards**

On June 15, 2012, EPA announced its proposal to revise the annual PM2.5 primary standard by lowering the level to within a range of 12.0 to 13.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , and to retain the 24-hour PM2.5 standard. EPA proposes to revise the secondary PM2.5 standards by adding a separate standard to address visibility and to retain the current secondary standards generally to address non-visibility welfare effects. The proposed secondary standard would be defined in terms of an index to measure light extinction.

### **III. ISSUES**

The following issues are expected to be examined at the hearing:

- EPA's current PM standards;
- EPA's proposal to revise the current PM standards;
- Potential regulatory costs and burdens associated with implementation of the proposed revised standards; and
- Potential impacts of revised PM standards on economic growth, jobs creation, and consumers.

### **IV. STAFF CONTACT**

If you have any questions regarding the hearing, please contact Committee staff Mary Neumayr at (202) 225-2927.