

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

“Reality Check II: The Impact of EPA’s Proposed Ozone Standards on Rural America”
Environment Subcommittee Hearing

April 29, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here this afternoon. We are here once again to discuss EPA’s proposal to lower the standard for ozone, the pollutant that causes smog.

We have heard before and we are likely to hear it again today that EPA’s efforts will be destructive to the nation’s economy. Fortunately, such doomsday predictions have been proven to be false time and time again. Americans have a strong track record of resourcefulness and innovation in the face of obstacles and I am confident that we will once again be successful in our efforts to improve the quality of the air we breathe.

I’d like to remind everyone here today why EPA is putting forward regulations to combat ozone and our biggest environmental challenge climate change. EPA is doing it not to advance a political agenda as some would have you believe, but as part of its statutorily defined mission to protect the health and well-being of Americans. In short, EPA is fulfilling the critical mission that Congress entrusted it with. And it is taking such actions because the scientific evidence supports them.

During the hearing we had last month on EPA’s ozone standard, some of my colleagues seemed to suggest that there was disagreement within the scientific community on the health effects of ozone so I asked one of our witnesses, Dr. Mary Rice, an adult pulmonologist and critical care physician, to comment on that opinion.

In her response to the Committee, she stated “that ozone exposure harms human health is a well-established scientific conclusion.” Organizations such as the World Health Organization, the National Academies of Science, the American Lung Association, the Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, the American Thoracic Society and many others have independently examined the scientific evidence and reached the same conclusion-- ozone is harmful to human health.

It is time for us to be supportive of EPA’s efforts to protect the American people. We need to allow EPA and the States to take the needed steps to improve our air. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.