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The current attack on clean air

Rich Heffern | Feb. 4, 2011 Eco Catholic

Legislation proposed this week [1]by Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) and Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) to block the Environment Protection Agency from enforcing safeguards to protect against carbon dioxide and other pollutants would be a serious public health setback, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) said.

?Now we know the upshot of that behind-closed-doors meeting last month between big polluters and the staffs of Rep. Upton and Sen. Inhofe: A proposal that puts polluters? profits ahead of our health?? said Franz Matzner, climate and air legislative director at NRDC.

?This is unprecedented political interference with sound science and enforcement of clean air safeguards, which have improved our water and air for the past four decades. Politicians should not block EPA scientists from continuing to reduce carbon dioxide, mercury and other life-threatening pollution. Big polluters cannot be allowed to continue spewing unlimited amounts of carbon pollution into our air.

?Reducing carbon pollution will prevent death, illness, and injury from more killer heat waves, more smog, the spread of infectious diseases, and stronger storms, floods, and hurricanes. Doing so also will provide needed certainty for clean energy developers and ensure that all polluters are held accountable and play by the same rules.

?Responsible public officials need to stand up for clean air and the health of our families rather than joining with the oil and coal industries to interfere with the EPA?s efforts to improve our quality of life.?

David Yarnold, president of the National Audubon Society, said: ?It?s outrageous that anyone would try to make a case for dirty air. But that?s exactly what those behind the flurry of extremist attacks on one of America?s most fundamental environmental laws aim to do. Radical legislation to undermine the Clean Air Act proposed by a handful of Congressmen including Representatives Upton (R-MI), Carter (R-TX), Senators Inhofe (R-OK), Barrasso (R-WY) and Rockefeller (D-WV) would harm kids with asthma and make our air less healthy to breathe. Is that really a good idea??

His statement [2]can be read on the Audubon Society Web site.

The Union of Concerned Scientists said: "The Clean Air Act is a law with a 40-year track record of cutting dangerous pollution to protect human health and the environment. Administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), this legislation has prevented more than 400,000 premature deaths and hundreds of millions of cases of respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

"Given the Senate?s inaction on a comprehensive climate and energy bill in 2010, we are now counting on the EPA to carry out its responsibility under the Clean Air Act to reduce the emissions that cause climate change. However, this hallmark legislation is currently under attack in Congress by legislators who do not believe global warming emissions should be covered by the Act, and who are actively challenging the EPA?s authority to regulate global warming emissions."

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