



### Defending Agriculture

Legal, environmental hot button issues that impact U.S. farmers.

## Will Congress Now Rein in EPA?

Posted on November 15, 2010 at 12:24 PM

[Click here](#) to view [recent posts](#)

The availability of abundant and reliable energy "horrifies people who relish scarcity... Today, there is a name for the political doctrine that rejoices in the scarcity of everything except government. The name is environmentalism."

This observation comes from George F. Will, a columnist carried by the Washington Post and recently quoted in an article by Christopher Horner entitled "The Sierra Club's War on Coal."

Another attack on inexpensive energy that we in agriculture use comes from newly re-elected Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., who claims "Coal makes us sick. Oil makes us sick. It's global warming. It's ruining our country. It's ruining our world."

Newly elected Republicans and even some Democrats claim Congress needs to stop many of the regulatory actions being undertaken by EPA. But Congress will find taking on EPA a challenging task.

The chairman of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Frances Beinecke, has told Republicans coming to Washington "...not to listen to folks who voted them in on a cresting wave of economic ire." She knows with EPA on her side, the agency's regulations will continue. In fact she is bold enough to say "we are going to get there with Congress or without Congress."

NRDC and others, with the help of EPA, will impose the political doctrine of environmentalism.

In several columns, I have addressed the farm dust or PM10 issue. however, EPA also regulates fine particle air pollution known as PM2.5.

PM2.5 comes from primarily truck, bus, farm and construction equipment exhaust and the burning of fuels such as oil and coal. PM2.5 can also be created from tobacco smoke, cooking and operating fireplaces. EPA has established a National Ambient Air Quality Standard for PM2.5. The standard is, for 24 hours there must be no more than 35 micrograms per cubic meter (35 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) of particulate in the air. The yearly standard is 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

To put this in perspective, there are a million micrograms in a gram.

EPA claims PM2.5 above this level is unhealthful and creates premature death in those with heart and lung disease. California even claims PM2.5 air pollution is responsible for 9,000 premature deaths in California and made this claim on September 1, 2010.

EPA has advised the public that it is considering lowering the 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to a range of 11-13 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. These efforts are aimed at imposing more EPA authority over emissions from farm, construction and truck diesel engines and combustion of coal and oil.

There are dissenting voices which Congress may want to listen to as it reviews EPA's rush to regulate emissions from combustion. In 2005, Dr. James Enstrom, a particle physicist and epidemiologist with 34 years on the faculty at UCLA School of Public Health, published a study entitled "Fine Particulate Air Pollution and Total Mortality Among Elderly Californians, 1973-2002" which claimed that PM2.5 fine particulate matter showed no premature deaths were being caused by fine particulate air pollution.

Dr. Enstrom's study demonstrated the lack of scientific justification for regulations on diesel and fine particles. EPA, on the other hand, claims it has studies relating to PM2.5 which show the PM2.5 standard should be made more stringent. Congress needs to conduct oversight where it appears EPA may be ignoring the facts.

So long as EPA and other regulators ignore data such as Dr. Enstrom's, EPA will continue to attempt to regulate major activities in this country unless the new Republican majority in Congress conducts extensive oversight of EPA's actions.

Dr. Enstrom, by the way, has been informed by UCLA that he was to be terminated from his Professor position on August 30, 2010. His termination decision has now been postponed until March, 2011, according to Environment and Climate News.

[Add a Comment](#)

---

**Recent Posts**

[Back to Top](#)

**Will Congress Now Rein in EPA?**

Posted on November 15, 2010 at 12:24 PM

Curbing the agency's 'rush to regulate' won't be easy.

Category: [At the Statehouse/Capitol](#)