

Chairman Hal Rogers – Opening Statement
Interior Appropriations Hearing – EPA
March 3, 2011

Thank you, Chairman Simpson, for yielding. Administrator Jackson, welcome to our committee and thank you for joining us.

This is a truly historic time, and I don't have to tell you that our nation has found itself at a crossroads. The 112th Congress has been solely focused on reining in out-of-control spending, getting our economy back on track and putting Americans back to work.

I reiterate – getting our economy back on track to create jobs and provide opportunity. With unemployment still hovering around 10%, this is unquestionably our top priority as a country and our chief responsibility as legislators, policy-makers and yes, administrators.

Chairman Simpson has alluded to some of our concerns about your \$9 billion budget submission, the EPA's third highest in history. When we're borrowing 40 cents on the dollar, that staggering figure, in and of itself, is disconcerting.

But I must state for the record that I am not confident that the budget you're defending today – or, frankly, your agency's actions in the last two years – align with our important goals of creating jobs and opportunity. In fact, I believe EPA is headed in the wrong direction with an aggressive and overzealous regulatory agenda that far exceeds the authority it's been granted.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform recently released a report identifying over SIXTY regulatory actions recently taken by EPA that could have negative impacts on job creation. SIXTY.

I have to wonder whether you are taking heed of the President's January 21 Executive Order to account for the cumulative costs of regulations, because EPA is running absolutely roughshod over our country's small businesses, the very engines that propel our economy forward. And you've left nearly every sector of the economy untouched – agriculture, manufacturing, construction, transportation – and the lifeblood of my region of the country, Appalachian coal mining.

Wrong-headed greenhouse gas regulations, so-called "guidance" on surface mining, the retroactive veto of a coal permit that has undergone more than a decade of environmental review, re-opening a long-standing definition of "fill material" that could have devastating impacts to the mining sector nationwide. All represent constitutionally dubious legislation by regulation.

You and I have corresponded on a number of these topics, and so you are aware that my people feel like EPA has taken dead aim at an industry that sustains 20,000 high-paying jobs in my state of Kentucky, and supplies the fuel to power 50% of our nation at a low cost.

Our Speaker in recent weeks has reiterated the need for "adult conversations" about the fiscal challenges that confront our nation, and I hope that's exactly what we can accomplish today. I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you.

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