

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ed Whitfield
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Upton and Whitfield:

I am writing, on behalf of the multi-sector membership of the Western Business Roundtable, to ask the House Energy and Commerce Committee to make consideration of The Farm Dust Regulation Prevention Act of 2011 (H.R. 1633) a legislative priority this Fall.

EPA is in the process of reviewing the particulate matter national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) under the Clean Air Act (CAA). While EPA's primary focus has been on the PM_{2.5} standard, it is also considering whether to revise (reduce and make more stringent) the current coarse particulate matter ("PM₁₀" or "fugitive dust") standard.

H.R. 1633 is intended to stop the agency from any effort to rush through revised regulations of the PM₁₀ NAAQS standard. We wholeheartedly support that objective.

Coarse particulate matter is composed primarily of blowing dirt and naturally occurring organic material, which has not been shown to be of concern to public health and safety at ambient levels. (This is particularly the case for the type of rural coarse PM that is predominant on agricultural and other resource-based operations, especially in the arid West.)

Despite that fact, the current PM₁₀ standard is set at 150 µg/m³ on a 24-hour basis. That standard, based on historically flawed health studies, is set conservatively low. In fact, in the 2006 final PM NAAQS rule, EPA acknowledged that the 150 µg/m³ PM₁₀ standard was set based on a desire to be cautious and not on clear evidence that this very stringent level was necessary to protect against adverse public health effects.

While acknowledging the uncertainty of the scientific justification for making this standard more stringent, the April 2011 *Policy Assessment for the Review of the Particulate Matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards* includes a recommendation for EPA to revise the current coarse PM NAAQS downward to a level of 65-85 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ -- a level twice as stringent as the current standard.

We are very concerned that any decision by the EPA to reduce the level of the current PM10 standard would put many areas -- not just in the West, but nationwide -- into CAA nonattainment status, with the attendant restrictions on new economic development and growth.

A recent study by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association reaffirms that concern: it shows many rural areas simply will not be able to meet this new standard. This will be devastating for agricultural and natural resource-sector operations.

This is an issue that needs your Committee's attention. H.R. 1633 is a good vehicle for that discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly Propst". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Holly Propst
Executive Director / General Counsel
Western Business Roundtable
14405 West Colfax Avenue, #159
Lakewood, CO 80401
1-800-410-1050