

BOUCHER INTRODUCES MEASURE TO HALT EPA REGULATION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Legislation Would Suspend for 2 Years Any EPA Action Regulating CO₂

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Representative Rick Boucher (D-VA) today introduced legislation to suspend for two years action by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Boucher joined his colleagues Nick Rahall (D-WV), Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, and Alan Mollohan (D-WV) in introducing the measure entitled the Stationary Source Regulations Delay Act. A companion measure has been introduced in the U.S. Senate by Jay Rockefeller (D-WV).

The Stationary Source Regulations Delay Act would delay for two years EPA action with regard to carbon dioxide or methane regulations for stationary sources, while allowing the consensus mobile sources regulations to move forward. This approach differs from other proposals to halt or delay EPA action on greenhouse gas regulation. **“By structuring the measure in this manner, we are seeing to find a responsible middle ground that can be enacted,”** Boucher said.

Following the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that greenhouse gases are a pollutant, the Environmental Protection Agency is now legally compelled to regulate greenhouse gases under the existing Clean Air Act. That law is not well suited for such action since it disables EPA from taking into account the unique needs of the coal industry and electric utilities that burn coal. **“EPA regulation of greenhouse gases would be the worst outcome for the coal industry and coal related jobs,”** Boucher said.

“In June, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a balanced measure which will control greenhouse gas emissions while preventing economic disruption. While this measure is far from perfect, I was able to secure a number of important changes to the bill which allow for the continued and robust use of coal and the deployment of carbon capture and storage technologies necessary for the coal industry’s future success. If EPA is allowed to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, economic considerations simply cannot be taken into account. EPA regulation would be costly and cumbersome,” Boucher said. **“The measure I have introduced will prevent the EPA from acting to regulate greenhouse gas emissions for two years, providing Congress time to approve a thoughtful regulatory program,”** he added.

Last year, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which establishes a program to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Congressman Boucher added key provisions to the measure which protects the coal industry by enabling utilities to continue using coal while greenhouse emissions are reduced. His amendments assure funding for carbon capture and storage technologies and enable utilities to keep burning coal while paying others to reduce emissions. Specifically his key changes to the bill provide:

- Free allowances to emitters, keeping the program affordable and encouraging coal use..
- An assured \$10 billion in funding for carbon separation and storage (CCS) technology development and an additional \$150 billion to incent its use by coal burning utilities. These funds will ensure that the technologies are fully developed and available at commercial scale.
- 2 billion tons of offset credits which enable utilities to keep burning coal while paying others to reduce emissions. This number is roughly equal to all the greenhouse gas emissions from coal use nationwide.
- Modifications to the performance standards which require new coal plants to meet certain CCS requirements. Congressman Boucher has succeeded in changing those to ensure that new coal plants will not be required to use CCS technology before it is widely commercially available and affordable.

While these changes make critical improvements to the bill, Boucher continues to work for further improvements as the bill moves through the legislative process. The measure introduced today would give Congress time to approve this balanced approach before EPA acts with costly regulations.

“While some may prefer to halt EPA action permanently, the votes do not exist in the Senate or the House to remove all EPA regulatory authority. Our bill is a responsible, achievable approach which prevents the EPA from enacting regulations that would harm coal and gives Congress time to establish a balanced program,” Boucher concluded.