



COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**  
Lamar Smith, Chairman

For Immediate Release  
June 21, 2018

Media Contact: Bridget Dunn  
(202) 225-6371

**Statement by Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)**  
*State Perspectives on Regulating Background Ozone*

**Chairman Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to our witnesses for being here today. Before we begin, I'd like to congratulate the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Norman, who is the new vice chairman of the Environment Subcommittee. We look forward to his contributions to the subcommittee.

The Science Committee has held a number of hearings on the regulatory overreach of the previous administration's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Today's hearing is a timely discussion on the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

The air in the U.S. is cleaner than it has ever been. Yet in 2015 the previous administration tightened the NAAQS for ground-level ozone.

The fastest way to hurt our local economy is to implement far reaching regulations that stunt business growth and development. The 2015 NAAQS often places heavy burdens on the American people, with few actual benefits.

Ensuring we have clean air and water, now and in the future, is important and should be a priority for everyone. However, regulations that stifle business and innovation, while doing little to actually meet these goals, are counterproductive.

Instead of using an unachievable, one-size-fits-all approach, EPA should collaborate with the states and come up with plans that actually work. Background ozone includes both natural and international ozone. Natural ozone comes from many sources including wildfires, lightning and vegetation. International ozone refers to emissions coming from other countries like China and Mexico.

In some areas of the country, even background ozone levels exceed 70 parts per billion. In these areas, no matter how much a state controls its own emissions it will never be able to comply with the 2015 NAAQS level.

We cannot beat mother nature and we cannot force other countries to stop their emissions. Geographic areas should not be held accountable for emissions they can't control.

Many areas that receive a non-attainment designation suffer economically. This designation discourages businesses from moving into the state because they would have to deal with permitting and compliance obligations. This in turn limits employment opportunities for hardworking Americans living in our rural communities.

It's good to have Diane Rath from my district in San Antonio here to comment on background ozone issues facing Texas. San Antonio, for example, is directly and adversely affected by the international ozone from Mexico.

Less than a quarter of ozone emissions detected in San Antonio actually originated in that city. Yet to comply with the NAAQS, San Antonio must implement a burdensome regulatory agenda that adversely affects businesses and citizens alike.

Being a good steward of the environment and promoting a healthy economy are not mutually exclusive. Hard working Americans are hit the hardest by these expensive regulations. Regulatory overreach costs billions of dollars, kills jobs and hurts the economy.

For example, expensive permitting regulations discourage employers from establishing businesses and creating jobs.

Because states have no control over international and natural emissions, even a state's greatest efforts to reduce emissions often fall short of the benefits envisioned by the Clean Air Act.

I remain hopeful that the EPA will review the current NAAQS standards and evaluate the science and process behind setting future NAAQS. Recently, Administrator Pruitt laid out five principles that will be implemented in future NAAQS reviews.

This "back-to-basics" process will ensure that sound science is the foundation of the NAAQS standards and that all relevant data is considered in implementation, including naturally occurring and international ozone.

###