

Thank you Chairman Loudermilk and members of the committee for having me here today. It's an honor to speak to you on this important issue affecting motorsports in America.

I represent an area of North Carolina that has a rich history of supporting and participating in motorsports. From amateur weekend racers to NASCAR drivers, motorsports plays a vital role in Western North Carolina both recreationally and economically. Many communities in my district and across the country have race tracks that provide an outlet for motorsports enthusiasts – both competitors and fans alike.

The Environmental Protection Agency recently issued a proposed rule that makes it illegal to convert a vehicle if its emission system is modified and taken out of compliance from its stock configuration. The EPA made this rule with little input from the affected motorsports stakeholders – catching many of them by surprise. Mr. Chairman, this is not the way to formulate a regulation.

While the Clean Air Act authorizes the government to regulate the emissions of vehicles, Congress never intended for the EPA to regulate vehicles that are modified for use on race tracks. In 1990, Congress affirmed this exemption when it authorized the EPA to regulate “nonroad vehicles” and explicitly excluded any “vehicle used solely for competition” from the nonroad definition.

This new regulation will prohibit responsible, law abiding people who wish to modify their car for racing on closed tracks from doing so. The federal government has no place at a track testing vehicle emissions as if it's a public road.

The EPA's action will harm all involved. From owners and operators of tracks to vendors who sell food and souvenirs and of course families who spend Saturday nights at their local short track.

Furthermore, this regulation targets businesses who manufacture the aftermarket exhaust systems that replace the stock systems. According to the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), this industry employs over one million people nationally. These systems are an essential part of racing and the makers of them are often small businesses that cater to specific markets.

People like Jason from Gastonia, my constituent who first brought this EPA overreach to my attention. For people like Jason, this is not simply a weekend hobby but rather what pays the bills for him and his family. We cannot stand idly by while the EPA regulates hard working Americans like Jason out of business.

In response to this misguided regulation, I have introduced HR 4715 – The Recognizing the Protection of Motorsports, or RPM Act. This bipartisan legislation reaffirms congressional intent that vehicles used solely for competition are not subject to emissions standards under the Clean Air Act and that it would not be considered tampering to modify these vehicles for exclusive track use.

If the EPA gets its way on this issue, it will do irreparable harm to motorsports and the businesses that power them. It is imperative we act now to stop the EPA's heavy-handed approach and preserve this sport that serves as a hobby and living to millions of Americans.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to speak on this issue. I applaud the Committee's work addressing this issue and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to preserve our nation's rich motorsports heritage for future generations.