[Mr. CHRISTENSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

EPA OFFERS MORE REGULATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. SHIMKUS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, the air in this Nation is getting cleaner. Major metropolitan areas are experiencing fewer and fewer days of dirty air, and it is time to thank the EPA for a job well done. In fact, according to the EPA, in almost every major city in America, air pollution levels have been dropping. Nationally since the EPA was established, the combined total of all causes of dirty air have decreased by 29 percent. This reduction occurred even as the Nation's population has grown by 28 percent, people drove more than twice as many miles, and the economy doubled in size.

Our Nation is on the right track to cleaner air. But if you talk to the EPA, you would think the sky was falling. This agency has proposed tightening the standards for ozone and particulate matter even more. This new standard, which may take effect without congressional approval, will not clean the air faster. In fact, it will cost the American economy jobs, erode local tax bases and provide nominal positive health effects. Our Nation does not need new regulations which may force people to car pool to work and increase regulations on our Nation's industries and family farms.

Our Nation needs regulations that are based on sound science, not emotionally driven, feel-good politics. Indeed the scientific community is not unified in its support of these new regulations. While the EPA has a study that claims it can save thousands of lives with these new rules, the National Institute of Environment Health Sciences, another government agency, came to the conclusion that high rates of pollution do not increase rates of asthma. This information directly contradicts the fundamental basis for the new regulation.

In addition, the EPA's own scientific advisory board, which is made up of industry, academic and medical experts, told the EPA that its new standard for particulate matter, quote, ''does not provide a scientifically adequate basis for making regulatory decisions for the setting of National Ambient Air Quality Standards and related control of particulate matter in the Clean Air Act,'' end quote.

We must also ask ourselves why, when the air is getting cleaner in America, the number of people being admitted to hospitals with respiratory complications are increasing? Why is a good thing having a bad effect?

Our Nation needs regulations that do not needlessly destroy jobs. Five of the 19 counties which I represent rely on coal as a substantial part of their economies. The coal industry has been hit hard by the EPA and stands to be eliminated in southern Illinois if stricter standards are implemented. Unemployment levels in some of my counties would climb even higher than the current 7, 8 to 9 percent that they are now. Not only would these new regulations mean more jobs lost in areas already suffering, but prices on consumer goods will go up as well. Conservative estimates on the direct cost of this regulation on Americans will be around $10 billion every year in higher costs for cars, farm equipment, electricity, and countless products that Americans rely on every day for their well-being.

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Mr. Speaker, as a newly elected Member of Congress, I can say that I am truly amazed and disappointed that the EPA would impose such high costs on the American people without little benefit. Our Nation's air is getting cleaner, the economy is growing, and the unemployment averages on the national level are at an all time low. Controversy surrounds the EPA studies, and all they can do is offer more regulations.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that the EPA is more interested in political agendas and self-preservation than in creating good national policy.

GOVERNMENT IS TOO BIG AND COSTS TOO MUCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BRADY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Mr. Speaker, working Americans often ask today, ''Why can't we make ends meet like our parents did? Why does it take a two-income family to provide even a basic quality of life for our families?''

President Ronald Reagan had a clear answer. Government is too big and costs too much. I would add that today we also have a government that regulates too much. Excessive regulation is a hidden tax on families and on our businesses. Compliance costs are estimated to be $6,000 for each American household, $6,000 in costs in regulation for American households.

If you couple taxes, if you add to it regulations, the average American worker is working until July 9 to pay all the costs associated with government. Excessive regulation crushes small business, the engine of our job creation, and today one of the most pervasive fears among America's small businessmen is that they will fail to comply with some obscure government regulation and be forced to shut down.

In 1995, President Clinton convened a conference on small business, asked them to meet in our capital. More than 1,600 attended. The No. 1 concern that they registered, they were overregulated and had too much government paperwork to comply with.

According to our Small Business Administration, the cost of regulation, of paperwork and of tax law compliance is about $5,000 per worker. It is even greater for smaller firms. Regulation puts a brake on our small business job creation, it puts a brake on the entrepreneurial spirit which is the promise of America.

An example of unnecessary regulation, as Congressman SHIMKUS just described, are the new proposed EPA air quality regulations that Carol Browner recently announced. They deal with ozone and particulate matter, and if adopted, these stricter standards mean that many communities that meet existing standards will be redesignated as nonattainment areas. Other communities who spent millions to control these types of pollution will be told they must now do it another way. It has no scientific basis, it has questionable benefits. The regulations though will have a dramatic impact on our families in Texas, where I live, and across America.

This new regulatory burden is an unproven, untested science experiment based on the premise that if an apple a day is good for you, then a bushel a day must be better.

Regulations have good intent, everyone supports clean air and clean water. Everything looks good on paper, but it is how it works in real life that affects you and I. The answer is to move the Federal Government closer to the customers they have served to initiate a cost-benefit analysis so we know what this costs, ensure that regulatory actions are based on sound science that we agree upon, that we have a budget within regulation that puts a ceiling on the cost of regulation to the American economy, and we have to initiate sunset review. That means put an expiration date on every regulation, on every program, on every agency, commission, and council, where they go out of existence unless they can prove their value and their worth to us today.

The bottom line is that American families and American businesses need a break from our Federal Government. We should restore common sense to our Government and remove the barriers to free enterprise and job creation. We have that opportunity in this session, and we need to take advantage of it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

IMPORTED PRODUCE LABELING ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. BONO] is recognized for 5 minutes.