

Killing Jobs, Cost Won't Stop Obama EPA

By Bob Beauprez | August 12, 2011



Friday, Aug. 12 (Townhall Finance) -- Air quality has improved dramatically in America since 1980.

According to the EPA nitrogen dioxide emissions are down 40%, sulfur dioxide dropped by 56%, and lead emissions by a whopping 96%. And, these improvements happened while the population grew by 22% and energy consumption jumped 19%.

This would seem ample reason for the government to leave well enough alone, but that's not the case for the current Administration. The Obama EPA is preparing to implement two major new air quality regulations that will cost consumers hundreds of billions of dollars more in their energy bills and destroy great numbers of American jobs.

H. Sterling Burnett and Kenney Meier of the National Center for Policy Analysis have looked at the ramifications of the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule and the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards.

They [concluded](#) that because of higher costs and power plant closures by 2020 these two new regulations could destroy another 1.4 million jobs, and drive up electricity costs for consumers by 11.5% and some businesses could see as much as a 35% increase.

Environmental activists like the current EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson, always claim improved air quality will translate to significant health benefits, but Burnett and Meier found those claims to be dramatically overstated. That's because very little of the targeted pollutants actually come from the air we breathe.

According to the researchers, "completely eliminating all U.S. power plant pollution would reduce hospital visits resulting from serious respiratory and cardiovascular health events by only 0.4 percent to 1.6 percent, according to estimates in a study commissioned by the Clean Air Task Force, an activist group."

With little to gain and considerable additional cost to be borne by business and consumers alike and with the U.S. economy in serious disrepair, Burnett and Meier say these new regulations are "arguably unnecessary." Reasonable people would likely arrive at the same conclusion, but don't look for the Obama Administration to back off any time soon – or ever.

After all, Obama declared war on the coal industry. In January of 2008, candidate Obama said, "If somebody wants to build a coal fired plant they can. It's just that it will bankrupt them because they will be charged a huge sum for all that greenhouse gas that's being emitted."

And, job destruction and higher energy costs won't stop him from his mission.