

March 15, 2011

## Even Unions Sound the Alarm Against EPA Red Tape

*“Lead to higher electric bills, billions of dollars in new costs and the closing of plants.”*

### Power Struggle

Labor unions, a core Democratic Party constituency, are lobbying the Obama administration to soften new regulations targeting pollution associated with coal-fired power plants. A look at some pending EPA actions that worry labor groups.



**Reducing mercury from power plants**



**Regulation of coal ash**



**Tightening standards on ground-level ozone**

Pollutant/issue

The EPA plans to propose standards for limiting emissions of mercury and other toxic substances from coal or oil-burning power plants.

The EPA has proposed regulating coal ash—a byproduct of burning coal to produce power—under strict hazardous-waste rules.

The EPA has proposed setting the nation's air-quality standard for ozone at between 60 and 70 parts per billion, compared with 75 ppb currently.

The debate

Coal-fired power plants are the nation's largest unregulated industrial source of mercury—a toxic element that can cause neurological disorders in children. Unions worry the rule will lead to job losses; the EPA has said mercury emissions from power plants pose 'significant hazards' to public health.

Environmentalists say federal regulation of coal ash is needed to protect human health and fish that live in nearby waterways; unions say designating coal ash as hazardous would stigmatize its use in construction projects.

The EPA says tightening the standard would help reduce premature deaths, aggravated asthma and bronchitis cases. Unions have questioned some of the scientific research the EPA has cited and say tightening the standard would cause job losses by driving up costs for businesses.

Status

The EPA says it will propose the standards by March 16, 2011.

The EPA proposed regulations in June 2010 but says it will 'almost certainly not' make a final decision this year.

The EPA says it intends to act by July 29, 2011.

Source: Wall Street Journal, March 14, 2011

- On the heels of Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) warning the President of EPA's regulatory attack on energy, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that powerful Unions in swing states are now protesting new EPA regulations:

*“Their contention: roughly half a dozen rules expected to roll out within the next two years could put thousands of jobs in jeopardy and damage the party's 2012 election prospects... The companies and the unions have said a new regulation targeting mercury and other toxic pollutants, **due to be proposed this week**, could lead to higher electric bills, billions of dollars in new costs and the closing of plants that employ thousands of workers.”*

- Even Unions that strongly support this Administration recognize that when the EPA rolls out more red tape and regulatory uncertainty, our economy suffers and more Americans lose their jobs.
- Republicans are committed to fact-based policies and streamlining regulations in communities across the country – not just swing states. We will continue to fight to make it easier for the private sector to grow and create jobs.