



PRESS STATEMENT

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Contact: Rich Robinson, Public Citizen, (202) 588-7773 or rrobinson@citizen.org; Brian Gumm, OMB Watch, (202) 683-4812 or bgumm@ombwatch.org

House Judiciary Committee Approves Irresponsible Regulatory Accountability Act; Bill With “Bipartisan” Facade Threatens Vital Public Safeguards

A Statement From the Coalition for Sensible Safeguards

Today, the House Judiciary Committee, along strict party lines, approved H.R. 3010, the “Regulatory Accountability Act of 2011,” which positions it for a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives. The bill is sponsored in the House by Reps. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) and Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) and in the Senate by Sens. Mark Pryor (D-Ark.), Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Susan Collins (R-Maine). The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards condemns this latest attack on public protections and strongly urges Congress to reject it.

The Regulatory Accountability Act (RAA) is one of the biggest threats to environmental standards, workplace safety rules, public health and financial reform regulations to appear in decades, and it is similar in scope to the much-maligned REINS Act. It would paralyze the implementation of current protective laws and counteract years of consumer protection, worker safety, and clean air and water laws by making costs to corporate interests more important than the health and safety of American workers and families.

The RAA would act as a kind of super-mandate, overriding the requirements of landmark legislation such as the Clean Air Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act and distorting their protective focus.

It would also greatly expand the kind of standards that must undergo formal rulemaking procedures – a highly complex process that can easily take more than a decade to complete. Even if a proposed standard somehow manages to survive this new procedural gauntlet, the bill alters the judicial review standard for most rules, making it easier for special interests and industry to have a rule struck down by judges sympathetic to corporate interests.

The bill would add new review requirements to an already long and complicated process, ensuring significant delays in developing and improving health and safety standards. It would allow special interest lobbyists to second-guess the work of respected scientists and staff through legal challenges, sparking a wave of litigation that would add more costs and delays to the rulemaking process, potentially putting the lives, health and safety of millions of Americans at risk.

Congress should focus its efforts on finding ways to ensure federal agencies enforce the laws designed to protect our food supply, water, air quality and financial security – something that polls show the great majority of Americans want – and stop trying to weaken the nation’s system of regulatory safeguards.

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The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards is an alliance of consumer, labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups, as well as concerned individuals, joined in the belief that our country’s system of regulatory safeguards provides a stable framework that secures our quality of life and paves the way for a sound economy that benefits us all. For more information about the coalition, see [http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about us](http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about_us).