

CAC Message Guidance: Mitch McConnell's Resolution of Disapproval (CRA)

Core Message: Senator Mitch McConnell's legislative attack on the EPA and the Clean Air Act strikes at the heart of our ability to responsibly protect public health and address safety threats in our communities. McConnell's threat to use the Congressional Review Act (CRA) on a standard that is not yet final ignores the letter of the law. His actions continue a pattern of obstructing public health safeguards against dangerous air pollution, including the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants that fuels climate change. If adopted, the legislation would set a precedent for similar attacks on safeguards for food safety, clean water, workplace and consumer protections, civil rights, other public health protections, and virtually any other public safeguard proposed by any administration.

McConnell's CRA is an abuse of the process and would obstruct the government's ability to function properly and protect Americans. The Senate should reject it.

Key Points

- Senator McConnell's CRA is an unprecedented attempt to block a federal public health standard before it is finalized, continuing his pattern of obstruction against clean air and carbon pollution safeguards.
- Setting a precedent by using the CRA to block standards before they are finalized would allow any senator or member of Congress to hijack any federal safeguards and cripple future protections for consumers, public health, employers, children, seniors, families, and communities.
- For example, if the CRA had been abused like this in the past, important public health safeguards like those to remove mercury from our air and eliminate toxins in toys could have been derailed.
- McConnell's proposal is just another way of obstructing the government's ability to function—this time by abusing the CRA to prevent commonsense safeguards designed to protect our health and our communities.
- Senator McConnell's proposal would handcuff federal safety protections and our ability to build a safer, healthier, more just future for our children. The Senate should reject McConnell's CRA proposal and the dangerous precedent it would set.

McConnell's CRA Blocks Efforts To Address Climate Change, Hurting Our Health

- Senator McConnell's CRA proposal would block a commonsense standard that would set the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants, the pollution that fuels climate change, before the rule-making process is completed.
- McConnell's proposal denies the consensus of more than 97 percent of the world's climate scientists that we must find ways to address climate change, including reducing the carbon pollution that fuels it.
- The carbon pollution standard for power plants, expected in June, would address climate change at its source — the power plants responsible for 40 percent of U.S. carbon pollution.

- EPA is using its authority, granted under the federal Clean Air Act and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, to set the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants, which threatens public health and fuels climate change.
- The world's leading scientists have said inaction on climate change will ensure worsening extreme weather events, threaten food supplies and increase public health risks. Yet, Mitch McConnell wants to block commonsense safeguards to cut carbon pollution from power plants, again putting polluter profits before the health of our children.
- Every day, power plants dump unlimited amounts of carbon pollution into our air. That has to stop. McConnell would allow unlimited carbon pollution to continue.
- EPA has worked in a collaborative way to draft a standard that recognizes the input of members of Congress, industry, public health advocates and many others. This effort was to ensure the EPA achieves its goal of "maximum flexibility" while protecting public health and setting the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants.

Background

***New York Times* Editorial:** <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/27/opinion/mr-mcconnells-latest-mischief.html>

Coalition for Sensible Safeguards: http://www.sensible safeguards.org/assets/documents/cra_proposed_rule_css_opposition-letter_021414.pdf