

**Senator Sheldon Whitehouse – Opening Statement
House Oversight and Government Reform Hearing
“Management Failures: Oversight of the EPA”
Wednesday, June 24, 2014**

The Environmental Protection Agency’s mission—to protect human health and the environment—is one of the most fundamental and popular responsibilities of the federal government.

Bad actors, like John Beale, can be found in large institutions and should be dealt with by the proper authorities. But we don’t in America impugn the integrity of the entire agency and its thousands of public servants. That’s a disservice to the American people who rely on the EPA to protect public health.

Earlier this month, EPA used its Clean Air Act authority, as established by Congress and affirmed by the Supreme Court, to propose carbon pollution standards for the country’s existing power plants. The approach taken in the standards was based on unprecedented public engagement. EPA held more than 300 public meetings, working with stakeholders of all kinds and all across the political spectrum.

EPA has put states in the driver’s seat, to come up with their own best plan to meet state-specific targets. States and power companies will have a wide variety of options to achieve carbon reductions, like boosting renewable energy, establishing energy savings targets, investing in efficiency, or joining one of the existing cap-and-trade programs. States can develop plans that create jobs, plans that cut electricity costs by boosting efficiency, plans that achieve major pollution reduction. As proposed, the rule will reduce carbon pollution while providing as much as \$93 billion in public benefit per year by 2030.

A recent Washington Post-ABC News poll found that 70 percent of the public supports federal standards to limit greenhouse gas pollution. And just last week, the Wall Street Journal and NBC News released a poll showing that two-thirds of Americans support President Obama’s new carbon pollution standard. More than half say the U.S. should address climate change even if it means higher electricity bills for them.

EPA’s proposal is also supported by major utilities like National Grid, faith organizations like the U.S. Conference for Catholic Bishops, and nameplate corporations like Mars, Nike, Starbucks, and countless others.

Four former EPA administrators who served under Presidents Nixon, Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush testified before the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety last week. They explained that carbon pollution needs to be addressed immediately; that EPA’s rule is a reasonable way to reduce carbon

pollution; and that industry has a history of developing innovative ways to comply with environmental regulations in ways that cost significantly less than industry's initial estimates.

The Clean Air Act, according to a 2011 EPA assessment, will benefit Americans more than its costs—by a ratio of 30 to one. Thirty dollars of value in the lives of regular Americans for every one dollar the polluters had to pay in cleanup costs. That's a good deal for America.

I am grateful to Administrator McCarthy for working diligently to do what Congress and the Supreme Court told EPA to do with the Clean Air Act—to reduce harmful pollution in accordance with the law and the best available science.