

## **MORE THAN 60,000 FIRMS IN U.S. BUSINESS GROUPS URGE CONGRESS TO SUPPORT EPA, CAUTION THAT CLEAN AIR ACT RULE DELAYS COULD DRIVE UP BUSINESS COSTS**

***Firms Challenge the Notion That D.C.-Based Trade Lobbying Organizations Speak for All U.S. Businesses; Six-Month Delay in EPA Rules Will Mean Lost Workdays, Lower Productivity From Workers.***

**WASHINGTON, D.C.//December 15, 2010//**Today, the EPA and the Clean Air Act got a huge boost from large and small U.S. companies, when over 60,000 firms represented by 14 business organizations told Congress to keep the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Clean Air Act strong.

At the same time, the groups expressed concern that the EPA's half-year delay of pending ozone (smog) rules will be costly to U.S. companies. The delay could result in higher health costs due to increased employee sick-day absenteeism and related medical costs borne entirely or partially by small and large U.S. companies.

The groups' joint letter (<http://www.abce.us/>) reads in part as follows: **"... (S)mall business owners support some of the key strategies needed to reduce pollution and transition to a clean energy economy. A recent national poll of small business owners conducted by Small Business Majority ... found that 61 percent of respondents agree that moving the country to clean energy is a way to restart the economy and make their businesses more competitive in the global economy, and that 50 percent support comprehensive clean energy and climate policy ... Larger businesses also support EPA's authority under the Clean Air Act and understand that it has spurred innovation and economic value for the U.S."**

Christopher Van Atten, spokesperson, American Businesses for Clean Energy, said: **"The business case for a vigorous EPA enforcing well designed and efficient Clean Air Act rules is clear. We support policy measures that will create new economic opportunities and drive the transition to a clean energy economy. This includes support for the adoption of effective federal climate legislation, EPA regulation of greenhouse gas emissions, and regulation of NOx, SO2, mercury, and other hazardous air pollutants from power plants and industrial sources. Business leaders need long-term policies that will provide the foundation for economic growth and prosperity. Blocking, delaying or weakening the Clean Air Act will only serve to set us back as we strive to build a new, strong and innovative economy."**

John Arensmeyer, founder and CEO, Small Business Majority: **"Our research confirms that small business owners support moving the country to clean energy. They understand the connection between a clean energy economy and small business growth. Our research also shows that the Clean Air Act's economic benefits have been significant, and anything limiting the EPA's ability to regulate greenhouse gases could negatively affect businesses small and large. In this economic climate, small businesses need all the help they can get to stay competitive in a global economy."**

Richard Eidlin, director, business engagement, American Sustainable Business Council, said: **"The Clean Air Act provides lawmakers with an example of how responsible environmental measures can both foster new industries and send a clear market signal to investors and entrepreneurs that innovation and investment in the clean energy sector is good business. As owners, employees and investors in sustainable businesses, we urge Congress to uphold the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate carbon emissions as authorized by the Clean Air Act."**

The 14 leading U.S. business groups joining together to support the Clean Air Act are:

- Small Business Majority;
- Main Street Alliance;
- American Businesses for Clean Energy;
- Businesses for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy (BICEP);
- American Wind Energy Association;

- American Sustainable Business Council;
- Manhattan Chamber of Commerce;
- South Carolina Small Business Chamber;
- Women's Business Development Center;
- Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility;
- Oregon Small Business for Responsible Leadership;
- The Center for Small Business and the Environment;
- New Voice of Business; and
- Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2).

Together, the organizations include more than 60,000 firms, ranging from some of the nation's largest companies to small "mom and pop" Main Street retailers and other firms.

Companies that want to sign on the joint letter supporting the EPA and Clean Air Act can do so at <http://bit.ly/ihhM69>.

A report issued in October 2010 by Small Business Majority ([http://smallbusinessmajority.org/energy/index\\_national\\_economic.php](http://smallbusinessmajority.org/energy/index_national_economic.php)) found that there are major economic benefits of the Clean Air Act. For example, in the last two decades, emissions of the most common air pollutants have declined by 41 percent, while Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased by more than 64 percent. The report also concluded that the Clean Air Act has spurred important technological innovations, such as catalytic converters, that have made the United States a world leader in the export of environmental export technologies. These exports grew by 130 percent between 1993 and 2003, and were valued at \$30 billion in 2004.

In addition to indicating strong U.S. business support for the Clean Air Act and the EPA, the groups cautioned that the EPA's recent decision to delay moving ahead with an ozone pollution rule by six months will come with a real price tag in terms of sick workers and family members, resulting in lost workdays, lower productivity, and other adverse bottom-line impacts for companies. According to the EPA, the new smog standards would "help prevent up to 12,000 premature deaths and 58,000 cases of aggravated asthma and save up to \$100 billion in health care costs." (See [http://www.boston.com/news/science/articles/2010/12/09/epa\\_is\\_criticized\\_for\\_delaying\\_pollution\\_rules/](http://www.boston.com/news/science/articles/2010/12/09/epa_is_criticized_for_delaying_pollution_rules/).)

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** A streaming audio replay of this news event will be available on the Web at <http://www.abce.us> as of 4 p.m. EST/1 p.m. PST on December 15, 2010.