

SENATE AMENDMENTS TO SBIR-STTR BLOCKING EPA'S AUTHORITY: POLITICAL MANEUVERS THAT WILL DO NOTHING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Washington, DC - March 16, 2011 – The following joint statement was issued today by American Businesses for Clean Energy, American Sustainable Business Council, Main Street Alliance, Small Business Majority and the South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce:

“We, the undersigned organizations representing a diverse set of business interests that range in size from fortune 500 companies to the small businesses that make up the backbone of this country, stand united in opposition to legislative attempts to undermine the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to enforce the Clean Air Act (CAA). The bipartisan CAA has a long standing history of protecting public health and the environment since being signed into law in 1970 and most recently amended in 1990 with overwhelming bipartisan support. In the last two decades, emissions of the most common air pollutants have declined by 41%, while Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased by more than 64%. Unfortunately, two proposed amendments unrelated to S. 493, the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and the Small Business Technical Transfer (STTR) Reauthorization Act of 2011 (SBIR/STTR Reauthorization), would block the EPA's authority to enforce provisions of the CAA. Congress created SBIR in 1982 and STTR in 1992 to stimulate technological innovation and commercialize new products that led to the creation of jobs such as those in domestic manufacturing. The SBIR/STTR Reauthorization represents the first long-term reauthorization since 2000 and would provide certainty to these critical programs if enacted into law.

However, some in Congress want to jeopardize the reauthorization of these programs by playing politics with the environment and forcing a debate around EPA's regulatory authority. Specifically, the following proposed amendments to the SBIR/STTR Reauthorization would roll back the EPA's ability to protect public and workforce health from dangerous emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases (GHG): The McConnell (R-KY) Amendment, would overrule public health experts and scientists by indefinitely taking away EPA's ability to regulate these emissions from polluting industries. We urge legislators to OPPOSE this amendment.

The Rockefeller (D-WV) Amendment would also overrule public health experts and scientists by temporarily taking away EPA's ability to regulate these emissions from polluting industries. Such a delay only creates further business uncertainty for forward looking businesses such as those we represent; therefore we urge legislators to OPPOSE this amendment.

These amendments won't help small businesses and won't create jobs. In fact, they'll leave small businesses – through factors such as higher employee health costs and productivity loss – to pay the price for dirtier air and will directly put jobs at risk. Over the past 40 years, the CAA has helped our economy create millions of new jobs and is one of the primary reasons for the dramatic growth of the U.S. environmental technologies industry and its workforce. Moreover, our research shows that the benefits of the CAA are wide reaching, and a diverse array of small businesses are eagerly looking to participate in a growing sustainable economy to boost their bottom lines. Given the negative impact on small business and environmental technology jobs that these amendments are bound to have, it is highly ironic that they would be attached to the reauthorization of the SBIR and STTR — programs that have been a key component of small business success. We urge the Senate to reject these amendments should they come up for a vote, and, instead, get back to providing support for programs like the SBIR that affect small businesses the most. Passage of either of these amendments creates a slippery slope towards undoing or delaying other critical protections under the CAA.”

Signed by:

American Businesses for Clean Energy
American Sustainable Business Council
Main Street Alliance
Small Business Majority
South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce

For more information, go to <http://www.abce.us>.

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