

EPA Actions Will Force Congress to Act on Carbon Dioxide



John Villyard, CEO

San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

On December 7, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released two findings regarding greenhouse gasses. The first, an endangerment finding, finds that the current and projected concentrations of six greenhouse gases in the atmosphere threaten public health and welfare. Among the six gasses: carbon dioxide (CO₂). The second finding states that greenhouse gas emissions from on-road vehicles contribute to that threat.

The announcement was a prerequisite to finalizing the EPA's proposed greenhouse gas emission standards for

light-duty vehicles, which were jointly proposed by EPA and the Department of Transportation's National Highway Safety Administration on September 15, 2009. However, the announcement may have other implications.

In response to the findings, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Glenn English said, "It is deeply disappointing that the Environmental Protection Agency has chosen to finalize its endangerment finding today, opening the door to use of the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. As countless experts from government and the private sector have indicated, the Clean Air Act was never intended to regulate CO₂, and its provisions are simply not workable when it comes to addressing climate change. The significant risk of unintended consequences resulting from this decision should have been enough to convince EPA to take

more time before reaching this conclusion."

English and others, including me, fear that the EPA findings were also released as a way to push Congress to act on CO₂ cap and trade legislation. We're *not* saying that CO₂ emissions should not be regulated. However, we fear that Congress may finalize a bill that isn't as well-crafted as it could be in the rush to avoid EPA control.

Why do we want to avoid EPA control of greenhouse gasses? We believe their oversight will not give adequate consideration of the impacts of greenhouse gas control upon everyday citizens.

NRECA has been working hard to convince legislators to modify proposed legislation for CO₂ control in such a way that is fair for all Americans. Right now, the proposals before the Senate are not.

Instead, the proposal suggests using cap and trade as a revenue enhancement mecha-

nism for the government. We believe national energy and climate change policy must focus on reducing emissions, not on "revenue enhancement."

We believe money generated—through cap-and-trade programs or otherwise—must be used wisely: devoted to developing related technology or returned to those who foot the bill. We believe Congress should take the lead on climate change, not regulators at EPA or Wall Street speculators.

Please, take the time to express your concerns regarding CO₂ control to Congress. Urge them to pass legislation to solve the problems and not legislation that lines the pockets of the government or speculators. Urge them to pass meaningful legislation now.

**SAN LUIS VALLEY
RURAL ELECTRIC CO-OP**
Serving the Valley Since 1937
3625 US Hwy 160 W
P.O. Box 3625
Monte Vista, CO 81144