

RUBEN GALLEGO
3RD DISTRICT, ARIZONA

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February 28, 2024

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Regan:

Thank you for your ongoing work to protect our nation's air and waters. I request that the EPA use administrative flexibility to work with localities in Arizona and the Inter-Mountain West to ensure that air quality regulations are effectively targeting air pollution at the source.

We share a common goal of protecting the health of Arizonans and our state's rich environment, including pushing back against efforts to undermine bedrock environmental protections such as the Clean Air Act and Waters of the United States. However, efforts to address air pollution in Arizona must focus on practical solutions that both account for the sources of pollution, including sources outside of impacted communities, and for ongoing efforts around electrification and environmentally conscious development.

I have heard from groups on the ground in Arizona that the EPA's implementation of recent air quality standards, namely the 2015 ozone standard, may be ignoring multiple factors specific to the air challenges of the Inter-Mountain West. This could in turn lead to counterproductive punishments placed on the region.

Based on the EPA's own Good Neighbor Ozone Modeling, over 80% of the emissions assigned to Arizona are not produced or controlled by residents, but rather come from Natural Sources, International Transport, and Interstate Transport. Parts of Arizona – including Maricopa County – are at risk of facing 2-to-1 emissions offset requirements and losing federal highway funds in the next couple of years, based on factors largely outside of the area's control. Such consequences would be devastating to Arizona's economy and would hurt the United States' long-term green transition.

Maricopa County is a national leader in electric vehicle, semiconductor, and battery cell manufacturing. Since the passage of the CHIPS and Science Act, for example, over \$60 billion in semiconductor manufacturing investment has come to Arizona. Slowing or halting the production of these vital components of the green transition will set back the entire country's shift to renewable, cleaner energy sources.

The bottom line is that these enforcement measures will not impact the majority of the emissions in Arizona, but they will hurt the United States' energy transition and national security. I implore you not to sanction the nation's climate solutions.

To that end, I request that you work with Arizona localities to identify solutions that actually work to protect the area's air quality. These could include categorization of international transport as part of a 179B declaration, flexibility around exceptional events, recognizing the role of wildfires in air quality degradation, encouraging regional electrification and grid resiliency efforts, identifying exempted industries, and more. We all share the same goal of improving the area's air quality, and these could move us in the right direction.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Arizona's local leaders and I stand ready to work with you on this issue.

Sincerely,



Ruben Gallego
MEMBER OF CONGRESS