

Overwhelming majorities of Americans want the Environmental Protection Agency to do more to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink. By a more than two-to-one margin, those who say “the EPA needs to do more to hold polluters accountable and protect the air and water” outnumber those who believe the EPA already “does too much and places too many costly restrictions on businesses and individuals,” according to a [poll](#) conducted by ORC International. Most importantly, a mere 18 percent believe Congress should block the EPA from updating its pollution standards.

Against this background, it is outrageous that House Republicans are launching an attack on the most basic law that keeps our air safe. This effort, undertaken primarily for the benefit of corporate polluters, will effectively turn the Clean Air Act into the Dirty Air Act by gutting one of our nation’s most successful public health laws. Since 1970, the Clean Air Act has saved hundreds of thousands of lives and improved the health of Americans in every state.

Over the last 20 years the Clean Air Act has [prevented](#) an estimated 843,000 asthma attacks, 18 million cases of respiratory illness among children, 672,000 cases of chronic bronchitis, 21,000 cases of heart disease and 200,000 premature deaths. What’s more, the economic benefits of the Clean Air Act during this period – including fewer sick days and hospital visits – have [outweighed](#) its costs by more than 30 to 1. The Clean Air Act tailpipe standards for model years 2012-2016 (which are part of the greenhouse gas regulations) will also

[save](#) Americans 77 billion gallons of fuel over the life of the vehicles sold in those years; this represents over \$240 billion in economic benefits including over \$182 billion in fuel savings. Undermining the Clean Air Act will threaten public health, our economy and our energy independence.

In compliance with a 2007 Supreme Court decision, the Environmental Protection Agency is moving forward in a responsible way to update the Clean Air Act to limit global warming pollution. These limits – which apply only to the biggest and dirtiest power plants – will help protect our economy and our people from the worst effects of global warming. It saddens me that some of my Republican colleagues continue to deny the science of global warming; they do so with reckless disregard for the devastation it will cause to our economy and our environment.

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