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Environmental Protection Agency
EPA Docket Center (EPA/DC)
Mailcode 6102T
Attention Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-0171
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

The Northwest Mining Association (NWMA) is submitting this letter on behalf of its members regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's Proposed Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) under the Clean Air Act. We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

NWMA is a 114 year old non-profit mining industry association based in Spokane, Washington with 1,650 members residing in 40 states. Our membership represents every facet of the mining industry, including geology, exploration, mining, engineering, equipment manufacturing, technical services, legal services, and sales of equipment and supplies.

NWMA strongly opposes the Proposed Endangerment Findings for carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. We do not agree that those gases threaten the public health and welfare, and regulation of such gases would cause severe economic harm to our members and the nation.

Furthermore, we believe the Clean Air Act (CAA) is ill-suited for addressing climate change and that regulation of GHGs under the CAA in its current form will result in highly inefficient and wasteful regulation with extremely high costs for little or no societal benefit. The CAA is a regulatory straightjacket that will not allow the nation to reduce GHG emissions in a flexible and cost-effective manner and will trigger highly undesirable unintended consequences.

Because 85% of America's energy production is from fossil fuels, any attempt to regulate, cap or tax carbon dioxide emissions will increase the price of energy and act as an invasive new energy tax. As per analysis completed by the Heritage Foundation's Center for Data Analysis, this new tax will burden businesses and consumers for years to come, and could shrink the American economy by nearly \$7 trillion by the year 2029. Single-year losses exceed \$600 billion in 2029, more than \$5,000 per household. Even worse, energy costs would skyrocket 30 percent or more, and annual job losses would exceed 800,000 in several years in the near future. Hit particularly hard is manufacturing, which will see job losses in some industries that exceed 50 percent.


Minerals and metals mining and processing will be directly and profoundly affected by CAA regulation of GHGs because these industries are highly energy-intensive. Spending on energy and electricity by both the nonferrous metals manufacturing and metal mining sectors represents up to 30 percent on their total costs. These companies are highly sensitive to increased energy costs that GHG regulation will create. At the same time, they have no ability to pass increased energy costs on to customers because metals and minerals prices are largely set in international markets, often on commodities exchanges, reflecting international supply and demand. Thus, U.S. GHG regulation, when not matched by foreign regulation, can create a tremendous competitive disadvantage for these companies that will lead to a leakage of jobs and economic development (not to mention emissions) overseas. This also would lead to an increase in an already dangerous reliance on foreign sources of minerals, metals and energy.

Despite the inevitable economic harm caused by the endangerment finding and consequent regulations, there is no discernable environmental benefit. In fact, EPA's own analysis strongly suggests that a 60 percent reduction in carbon-dioxide emissions by 2050 will reduce global temperature by 0.1 to 0.2 degrees Celsius by 2095. While putting in place costly regulations on the entire U.S. economy is always a bad idea, it's especially nearsighted to do so in such difficult economic times for a negligible environmental benefit. This will result in a lower standard of living Americans relative to the rest of the world.

Using the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon dioxide would likely be the most expensive and expansive environmental regulation in history and will bypass the legislative process completely. Furthermore, although the Environmental Protection Agency claims the effects of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are compelling and overwhelming, the scientific evidence suggests anything but that. The agency should not act prematurely to regulate something that is not a problem to begin with. Therefore, we respectfully ask that the Environmental Protection Agency not formalize the proposed endangerment finding and to defer further action on CAA regulation of GHGs so that our elected representatives can decide how the nation should address climate change concerns. Only Congress can address the proper balance between economic growth, energy independence and environmental goals.

Thank you for the consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Laura Skaer
Executive Director