



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on March 25, 2016

EPA Boss: Coal Regulations Are About the Politics of Power

In a classic case of exercising power for the sake of power, Gina McCarthy (shown), administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), admitted that the real reason for EPA regulations is “showing sort of domestic leadership as well as garnering support around the country for the agreement we reached in Paris.”



Her admission against interest was made during testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Committee on Tuesday. When grilled by Representative David McKinley (R-W.V.), about EPA regulations that are crippling the coal industry, McCarthy did not dispute the charge that the regulations will have no measurable effect on “global warming.” Instead, she said that the “benefit” of the regulations is in flexing federal muscle over industry.

McKinley began by saying that since other countries — notably China and India — are increasing their use of coal, “the world is not following our leadership.” He added that he had asked McCarthy about this issue “two or three years ago,” and reminded her that, “you were going to get back to me and I never heard back from you.” He reiterated his question from then:

The IPCC ([Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)) with the United Nations said that if we terminated all coal-fired power plants in America — so we didn’t burn one ton of coal in America — the total reduction to CO₂ in the globe would only be two-tenths of one percent. Do you think that’s a measurable impact on the climate of the world? Especially given that the other nations aren’t going to follow? So, if we terminate two-tenths, but the other nations of China and India are going to way more than make up for that loss, is it worth it to our economy to put all our people in our coal companies out of work for something that’s not measurable?

Rather than address the facts — much less the science — McCarthy said:

Sir, I am not looking at making any choices on the kinds of energy that are generated. I’m really trying to keep my eye on my job, which is to try to reduce pollution.

Well, you have to give her good marks for candor; that’s not a trait often seen in bureaucrats. Perhaps, though, she was simply trying to avoid another instance of facing impeachment for perjury. Aside from admitting that she is not concerned about either how Americans will power their homes or where they will work once the economy is tanked over these worthless regulations, the most noteworthy part of her statement is that she ignores the fact that a reduction of two-tenths of one percent in emissions *is not*



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measurable. If her job is to “try to reduce pollution,” she could surely find a way to cut it by more than what is less than a drop in the bucket. If she tried really hard, she could probably find a way to do that without such damage to the nation’s economy.

McKinley challenged her by pointing out that — even though 40 percent of America’s power comes from coal — the federal government has put 33 percent of that coal off limits. “You are part of this administration that has a war on coal that is saying, ‘we’re not going to use coal,’” He told McCarthy. He pressed the issue further, asking her why the EPA continues its policies when there is “no benefit:”

I don’t understand. If it doesn’t have an impact on climate change around the world, why are we subjecting our hard working taxpayers and men and women in the coal fields to something that has no benefit?

The EPA boss replied without disputing McKinley’s claim that the regulations will have “no measurable” impact on either pollution or “global warming” (or climate change or whatever new branding is being applied this week). Instead, she admitted that the reasons for the regulations have less to do with substance and more to do with the appearance of strength:

I think sir, we see it as having had enormous benefit in showing sort of domestic leadership as well as garnering support around the country for the agreement we reached in Paris.

McKinley was quick to point out that “no one’s following it. China has doubled — since that Paris Accord, China has already announced that they are going to put up 360 [coal-fired plants]; India has announced that they’re going to double their use of coal.” Considering that McCarthy admits the “benefits” of the regulations are all about the politics of power, he was likely wasting his CO₂-rich breath.



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