

Over the strong objection of Rep. Peter Welch, the House today passed yet another bill aimed at dismantling landmark environmental protection laws and handcuffing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The anti-environmental measure passed by a vote of 249 to 169.

The Transparency in Regulatory Analysis of Impacts on the Nation (TRAIN) Act blocks two important Clean Air Act standards from taking effect:

The first, the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard, limits the amount of mercury and other toxic pollutants that utilities can emit. Mercury is a powerful neurotoxin of particular concern for pregnant women and young children because it damages the developing brain. Vermont has led the nation in passing a series of laws to regulate the sale and disposal of mercury-added products.

The second, the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule, requires 27 states in the eastern, central and southern United States to reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from power plants that pollute the air in downwind states. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, delaying this rule for one year will result in 25,330 deaths, 11,000 heart attacks, more than 120,000 asthma attacks and hundreds of thousands of missed school or work days due to illness.

"This bill reflects the clear agenda of House leaders to wage an all-out, relentless assault on the EPA and the landmark environmental laws it enforces," Welch said. "Gutting regulations that promote human health and protect the environment simply defies common sense. If this bill becomes law, it will put tens of thousands of lives at risk, pollute the air we breathe and cause a spike in hospital and emergency room visits."

Welch worked to amend the bill on the House floor Friday. His amendment would have required the addition of key environmental and health voices – the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – to a newly-created interagency committee which, under this legislation, would be empowered to approve all EPA regulations. Additionally, the Welch amendment would direct the committee to look at important health impacts on the most vulnerable subpopulations (such as children and the elderly) when reviewing proposed rules. Welch's amendment was rejected by a vote of 173 to 236.

## Welch fights latest effort to gut Clean Air Act standards

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Welch spoke in opposition to the TRAIN Act on the House floor earlier in the week. To see the video, [CLICK HERE](#) .