

CLOSING STATEMENT

As we wrap up this hearing, I want to again express my gratitude to each witness for testifying today. We were privileged to hear from a group of Nebraska stakeholders who provided details on the challenges faced by businesses, families, and communities as the administration finalizes the proposed rule to lower the ground-level ozone standard.

Nebraska is unique. We are the only 100 percent public power state in the nation. We own the electricity that is generated and consumed within our borders. Nebraska is also blessed to have a robust manufacturing industry and small-business community. These are important assets that create jobs and ensure that our rural communities and municipalities continue to thrive.

Currently, Nebraska has zero counties in nonattainment. However, under the proposed rule, 57 Nebraska counties will be classified as being in nonattainment – many of these communities are in rural and primarily agricultural areas. Furthermore, the EPA’s modeling and data interpretation cannot verify that tightening the ozone standard will result in health benefits. I have serious concerns about the impacts the proposed rule will impose on small business and energy intensive industries.

It is clear that imposing additional rules and permitting requirements on our utilities and job creators will only stifle economic growth and drive up the costs of important projects.

I have supported, and will continue to support, every legislative opportunity to force the EPA to withdraw the rule and maintain the current ozone standard of 75 parts per billion.

We should not be in the business of creating unnecessary regulations that generate more red-tape. Instead, we need to explore policy options that promote growth and enable our job creators, communities, and families to prosper. I look forward to utilizing the insights provided by the stakeholders at this hearing to do exactly that.

Again, I thank the witnesses for appearing today. The hearing is now adjourned. (*Pound gavel.*)