

John Paul, Administrator for the Regional Air Pollution Control Agency—RAPCA

RAPCA is the local agency in Montgomery County and 5 surrounding counties—Clark, Darke, Greene, Miami, and Preble.

We do the inspections, investigate the complaints, process industry permits, and monitor the air quality for our six counties.

I have been with the agency for 38 years and seen a lot of change over the years and considerable progress in clean air.

### Importance of Clean Air and Its Effects on Health

It is a fact that the average person breathes approximately 35 pounds of air every day. Without air, the average human being would live about three minutes. The importance of the air we breathe must never be treated nonchalantly. Air is the #1 element that sustains our lives.

The Clean Air Act is a genuine American success story and one of the most effective tools in U.S. history for protecting public health. It has sharply reduced pollution from automobiles, industrial smokestacks, utility plants, and major sources of toxic chemicals and particulate matter since its passage in 1970. The law has saved tens of thousands of lives each year by reducing harmful pollutants.

The effects of dirty air are known by many and include:

- asthma attacks;
- acute bronchitis;
- chronic bronchitis;
- upper and lower respiratory symptoms;
- heart attacks;
- lost work days; and
- premature death

We live in a very polarized society today, with very little discussion and consideration of moderate positions. The art of collaboration and compromise appear to be lost. In fact, it is almost like compromise has become a dirty word. I see this on both sides—each side says you are either for me or you are against me—and if you are in the middle, you are publicly rejected by both sides.

If you follow Congress today—especially the US House, you will see Clean Air and Jobs being presented as opposite ends of the spectrum. Clean Air measures are spoken of as being Job-Killing. On the other hand you will hear some advocacy groups claiming that industry and corporate America are evil and have profit as their only goal. Don't we know from past experience that the truth is somewhere in the middle of these two extreme positions?

In fact, the Clean Air Act and the environmental progress made in this country over the past 40 years has always been about middle ground. Reasonable controls on air pollution sources implemented over reasonable periods of time. Controls that protect public health while promoting steady economic growth.

US EPA is on the brink of adopting in final form two very important rules for the control of Electric Utility Coal-fired units. These rules will require control of pollutants that contribute heavily to smog—both ozone and fine particulate pollution across our nation—especially the Eastern half of the United States. The rules will also require the control of toxic air pollutants, primarily mercury, a known neural toxin. The rules will address sources of air pollution that have operated without modern controls for 35 to 60 years. These rules have been debated and discussed for more than 20 years—since the adoption of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. Adopted under the direction of a Republican President and Administration by the way.

So, we are down to the wire for the adoption of these rules, and what do we see in Congress? We see a concentrated attack on EPA and the rules that would finally require controls on the largest sources of air pollution in the country. And what do we hear on the radio—adds calling for the US Senate to tell EPA to “Hold your horses.” The implication is that we cannot afford clean air, that the control of 40 year-old inefficient coal-fired electric generating units is somehow an unreasonable requirement.

Air Pollution Control Agency officials across the country are calling for support for EPA’s rules—specifically the Cross State Air Pollution Rule, and the Utility Toxics rule. Both of these rules are scheduled to be finalized this year and both will require modern controls on utility boilers. They are under attack in the House and we need their support in the Senate. We need these controls to protect public health. We also need these rules to help assure that the energy needed for tomorrow’s economic growth is reliable and sustainable. We ask for your support.