

Senator Shelley Moore Capito Opening Statement
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety
Examining the Local Impacts of EPA's Climate Regulations
Wednesday, October 5, 2016
Logan, West Virginia

Good afternoon. I would like to thank the witnesses for appearing before this Committee today, and my colleagues, Senator Manchin and Representative Jenkins, for joining me for this important hearing on the devastating effects that EPA's anti coal regulations are having on our state.

Last week, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia heard the oral arguments on the legality of EPA's Clean Power Plan, which was stayed by the Supreme Court in February. Afterward, West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrissey, who has led this fight, joined me, EPW Chairman Inhofe, Senator Manchin and a host of other Attorneys General to talk about the case.

While we are understandably focused on the projected impacts of the Clean Power Plan, it is important to stress that much of the damage we will hear about today has been caused by earlier anti-coal EPA policies such as Utility MACT.

Coal industry bankruptcies, caused at least in part by regulations, have jeopardized promised health care benefits for retired miners and caused a drastic reduction in contributions to the UMWA Pension Fund. I am working hard, together with my colleagues in the West Virginia delegation, to pass the Miners Protection Act in order protect these earned benefits for retirees. This bill is urgently needed, as more than

5,100 West Virginia coal mine retirees will lose their health care coverage at the end of the year if Congress fails to act.

West Virginia has 18 coal units or about 2,737 megawatts of power retiring because of EPA policies not including the additional closures that will be caused if the Clean Power Plan is implemented. That is the amount of electricity it takes to power more than 2.7 million homes. And it is equivalent to shutting down almost the entire electricity supply of Vermont and Rhode Island combined.

Coal jobs are good jobs. The West Virginia Office of Miners Health, Safety & Training puts the average miner's wage at \$84,000 a year. Much higher than the \$39,100 average non-mining annual salary in West Virginia.

Coal jobs also support other jobs. Every vendor in the supply chain is affected. For every 1 coal job, 7 other jobs are created. Coal miners out of work have less disposable incomes to spend in their communities, affecting everything from grocery stores to local restaurants and retailers. All we have to do is look around Logan to see the effects.

Today we will hear from Gene Trisko, an attorney who represents the United Mine Workers of America who will be testifying on the impact of the Clean Power Plan on West Virginia, including the projected cumulative loss of \$47 billion of state economic output. I will repeat that: economic losses of \$47 billion.

We will hear from Bob Pasley, a Democrat and President of the Wayne County Commission, who will detail the difficulties in maintaining school infrastructure, ambulance services and other general county operations in the face of slashed budgets from lost tax revenues.

And finally, we will hear from Bo Copley, a coal miner who lost his job as a maintenance planner just over a year ago. He has seen firsthand the ripple effects of a shuttered coal mine across multiple businesses and his entire community.

These are the human impacts of the administration's climate policies and ones the EPA would rather ignore. Last February, during an Environment and Public Works Committee hearing, I questioned EPA Acting Assistant Administrator Janet McCabe about why EPA had not conducted any listening sessions in West Virginia when they were drafting the Clean Power Plan. I was shocked when she responded that it was because EPA "wanted to have those [discussions] in locations where people were comfortable."

So the "comfort" of EPA bureaucrats was more important to this Administration than coming here to Logan—or to Mingo or McDowell or Boone counties—to talk to people like our witnesses today, and people like all of you in the audience, the people who will bear the brunt of these regulations, and whose lives and livelihoods are directly impacted.

Well, I want all of you to know, I am here. Senator Manchin is here, Representative Jenkins is here. And there is no place where we would be more "comfortable."

Thank you all for coming. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses, and I will now turn to Senator Manchin, and then Representative Jenkins, for their opening statements.

Thank you.

###