

Extreme RAA Would Sabotage Major Health, Safety, Consumer and Environmental Protections

Coalition for Sensible Safeguards Statement on the Regulatory Accountability Act of 2015 (H.R. 185)

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Contacts: Brian Gumm, bgumm@foreffectivegov.org, (202) 683-4812
David Rosen, drosen@citizen.org, (202) 588-7742

The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards strongly opposes the Regulatory Accountability Act (RAA) and is urging members of Congress to oppose it. This innocuous-sounding bill is designed to undermine our nation's environmental, public health, workplace safety and consumer financial security protections – not improve them.

The RAA would rewrite dozens of laws, including the Clean Air Act, the Consumer Product Safety Act and the Food Safety Modernization Act by requiring federal agencies to put corporate profits ahead of the health and safety of American workers and families. Agencies would have to produce highly speculative estimates of all the indirect costs and benefits of proposed rules and do the same for any potential alternatives. What counts and does not count as an indirect cost or a potential alternative? The bill leaves that up to the imagination of industry.

In addition, the RAA would hamstring the work of agencies like the Securities and Exchange Commission, the National Labor Relations Board, the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The bill would subject their work to review by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, which is infamous for delaying, diluting and blocking important new safeguards. Federal agencies already take years to issue health and safety standards. The dozens of cumbersome requirements added by this bill would make that process even longer.

Any high-stakes rule that miraculously made it through these roadblocks would face unprecedented challenges. The RAA would allow industry lobbyists to second-guess the work of respected scientists through legal challenges, sparking a wave of litigation that would add even more costs and delays to the rulemaking process – while putting the lives, health and safety of millions of Americans at

risk.

The costs of blocking crucial standards and safeguards are clear: The Wall Street economic collapse, the Upper Big Branch mine explosion in West Virginia, countless food and product safety recalls and massive environmental disasters including the Dan River coal ash spill in North Carolina and the Freedom Industries chemical spill in West Virginia are just some of the most recent examples.

It's no wonder [polling](#) shows that Americans want better enforcement of our nation's rules and standards. Congress should listen to the public and stop trying to sabotage the safeguards that protect us all.

To learn more about the potential effects of the bill, see the Coalition for Sensible Safeguards' 2011 report: [Impacts of the Regulatory Accountability Act \(PDF\)](#). The latest version of the bill has been partially revised, but the problems at the heart of the bill remain.

Quotes from CSS Partners:

“This bill handcuffs federal agencies and poses a significant threat to consumer protection, health and safety. If adopted, H.R. 185 would waste federal resources, minimize the ability of federal agencies to do their jobs to protect the public and ultimately harm American consumers.” CFA's opposition letter can be found at www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/CFA-RAA-Opposition-ltr-1-12-15.pdf

Rachel Weintraub
Legislative Director and General Counsel
Consumer Federation of America

“The RAA aims to empower giant corporations by keeping consumer, environmental and other regulating agencies from issuing new rules. The bill sends a clear message: Giant corporations won't be subject to law and order.”

Robert Weissman
President
Public Citizen
Coalition for Sensible Safeguards co-chair

“Under the current rulemaking process, it now takes years for agencies to put public protections in place, thanks to the obstruction of regulated industries, convoluted court challenges and duplicative reviews. The Regulatory Accountability Act would make this situation much worse, jeopardizing public health and leaving more American families at risk. We need a regulatory system that efficiently incorporates scientific and technological advances into our health and safety standards, not one that prevents improvements.”

Katherine McFate
President and CEO
Center for Effective Government
Coalition for Sensible Safeguards co-chair

“This bill does a disservice both to science – and its role in informing good public policy – and democracy. House sponsors know that citizens want the government to protect our environment and public health and safety. But they are choosing instead to defer to the priorities of special interests. By rushing this complicated proposal through, they are making sure their real aims are hidden, even from new members who lack the time to cast an informed vote.”

Celia Wexler
Senior Washington Representative
Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists

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The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards believes in regulations that protect American workers and families. We are a national alliance of more than 150 consumer, labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups representing millions of Americans. For more information about the coalition, go to [http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about us](http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about_us).