



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 13, 2011

## Unions & Small Govt Groups Rail Against EPA Regulations

New regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have many people up in arms, including some unions. Aware that the regulations will be job-killers, the unions and small government advocate have actually discovered some common ground.



*The Blaze* [reports](#):

A Texas company is suing to block new EPA cross-state air pollution rules. If the regulations are not changed, Luminant Energy claims it will be forced to close two plants and fire 500 people. Texas was not initially included in the new EPA rules that target sulphur-dioxin emissions with a mandate requiring a 64% reduction from 2010 levels, but in July the Lone Star state was added to the list.



According to the Titus County Chamber of Commerce Director Faustine Curry, the regulations would have a detrimental impact on the Texas economy.

This would be devastating to the Northeast Texas economy not just Titus County. In Titus County, we have the power plant, the mines, Curry explained.

Luminant contends that without the job losses and plant shutdowns, it would be unable to comply with the new regulations, which they must meet by January.

Additionally, three units at Luminants Monticello plant outside of Mount Pleasant will be shut down, and plant officials report that they plan to stop mining coal at the Thermo and Winfield mines and instead opt for cleaner-burning coal from Wyomings Powder River Basin.

The regulations have provoked the ire of union workers in Missouri, who agree that the EPAs new regulations will cost consumers more money while threatening to destroy jobs. After all, eighty percent of Missouri's power comes from coal.

The Chamber of Commerce has been a steadfast opponent of the EPA regulations for months. Bill Kovacs, Senior VP of science, technology and regulatory affairs testified before a Congressional Committee last summer:

The cumulative impact of regulatory action can be overwhelming: agencies literally have the power to decide the fate of firms and entire industries. American Electric Power Co. made headlines last month when it disclosed that EPA's "train wreck" of coal industry regulations—Coal Ash, Utility MACT, the Transport Rule and Cooling Water Intake structures—would force the utility to retire 6,000 megawatts of coal-fired generating capacity and spend another \$6 billion to \$8 billion reworking the rest of its fleet. AEP would close three power plants in West Virginia, one in Ohio and one in Virginia, and would retire several boilers at coal plants in Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio,



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Texas and Virginia.

As a result, the *Energy for Missouri Jobs* is [asking](#) for a more balanced approach from the EPA. *Energy for Missouri Jobs* is currently circulating a petition that reads, help us protect Missouri jobs and prevent electricity rate increases. Missouri will lose 76,000 jobs and electricity rates will increase by as much as 23.1 percent under proposed EPA regulations.

Likewise, the former head of the St. Louis AFL-CIO, Robert Kelley, President Emeritus of the St. Louis Labor Council and member of Energy for Missouri Jobs, indicates, Missouri working families cannot afford regulations that will raise electricity costs and destroy jobs during this fragile economic recovery. The EPA needs to consider a balanced approach that gives us cleaner air without sacrificing jobs and increasing energy prices.

In addition to that, News-Journal.com [reports](#), Luminant also announced a lawsuit it filed in federal court to exclude Texas from the cross-state pollution rule and prevent the job losses and plant closures. The rule is designed to attack pollution-causing emissions that travel across state lines, and Texas initially was not included in it among states ordered to comply.

Curry states, You hope that the court stay will work and things get sorted out to the benefit of all. Im sure that Luminant wants to try to deal with it with the least amount of painWe have been so fortunate to have Luminant in the community.

If the court does not rule in favor of the company, the layoffs will take place in 2012 and 2015. Luminant spokeswoman Ashley Barrie said, We estimate 400 jobs will be eliminated by early next year, with the remainder being lost by 2015 once mining reclamation work is complete at the affected mines. To be clear, this is the plan if we are unsuccessful with our legal actions.

Since Texas was recently added to the list of those who must comply with cross-state rules, AEP Southwestern Electric Power Co. has announced it will be shuttering one of its units at the Welsh plant by December 2014 to meet the EPA standards, which result in the loss of 14 jobs.

Texas was added to the roster of states in July, provoking the criticism of Governor Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, Railroad Commissioner Barry Smitheran and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

With governors and utility companies opposed to the EPA regulations, as well as unions and individuals who dread the increased electricity costs, one would expect the federal government to respond and perhaps reform the regulations, or better yet, repeal them. Thus far, there has been no such luck.

*Illustration: EPA seal (top) and Washington, D.C. headquarters (bottom).*



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