

October 10, 2013

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Honorable McCarthy:

Last month, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced eleven upcoming public listening sessions to be held “nationwide” to seek public input from stakeholders about the Clean Air Act and carbon emissions from existing power plants. Upon review of the EPA’s schedule, I was disheartened to see the locations of these sessions and the short notice provided to stakeholders in the coal industry.

As you may know, coal-fired power plants provide 37 percent of electricity in the U.S. Yet, despite the coal industry being a major contributor to America’s power generation, the EPA officials planning these listening sessions apparently do not want to listen to those who work in the coal industry. All of these listening sessions will be held in major metropolitan areas—locations far away from the rural surface lands and mountains that provide coal for U.S. power plants and employment for thousands of hardworking Americans. In fact, of the ten states with the highest percentage of coal-fired electricity, none were scheduled by the EPA for a listening session. My own state of Kentucky ranks second in coal-fired electricity where 92 percent of the Commonwealth’s electricity comes from coal; yet, the Commonwealth is completely omitted from the EPA’s list.

I have also noted that none of the listening sessions are scheduled to be held within reasonable driving distance of Southern Appalachia, one of the areas most affected by the proposed regulations. For example, Pike County, the largest producer of coal in eastern Kentucky, is roughly a seven-hour drive away from the closest listening session in Atlanta, Georgia on October 23rd. Coupling this distance with the high costs associated with last-minute air travel, it appears as though the EPA has intentionally made it virtually impossible to hear from those who live in Kentucky coal country.

Given the concerns I have raised in this letter, I request the EPA host an additional listening session in Pikeville, Kentucky, which is located in the heart of coal country. Pikeville is certainly much more representative of those who work in the coal industry than San Francisco, which is located in a state where coal has traditionally provided less than one percent of the state’s electric power generation. A Pikeville meeting would bring much needed balance to these listening sessions.

Thank you for considering my request in a timely manner. Should you or your staff have any questions or concerns, please contact Tate Bennett in my office at (202) 224-8945 or at tate_bennett@mcconnell.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



MITCH McCONNELL
UNITED STATES SENATOR