

Polluters Lose in Clean Air Act Attack

from [Wildlife Promise](#) (National Wildlife Federation)

4/6/2011 // [Joe Mendelson](#) // [Clean Air Act](#), [climate change](#), [Congress](#), [Continuing Resolution](#), [Debbie Stabenow](#), [EPA](#), [Exxon Mobil](#), [Jay Rockefeller](#), [Koch Industries](#), [Mitch McConnell](#), [Sherrod Brown](#)



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Today, attempts to rollback parts of the [Clean Air Act](#) that direct the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address carbon pollution failed in the Senate.

In a game of political hide-and-seek, varying polluter interests attempted to hijack a bill ([S. 493](#)) that reauthorizes two small business innovation and technology research programs.

It was a stealthy attempt to amend the bill to prevent the EPA from limiting the vast amount of carbon pollution spewing everyday from our power plants, oil refineries, and factories.

Instead of a polluter payday, however, **the attempted hijacking exposed confusion** among the varying interests targeting the [Clean Air Act](#) and showed that navigating **how to limit air pollution is a job best left to the experts at the EPA.**

Indeed, the votes showed that the Senate process of trying to forge polluter loopholes in the [Clean Air Act](#) creates nothing but a political mess. It took four different amendments to the small business bill to try and cater to the various and differing concerns. Each one failed and combined to create one big sinkhole of squabbling polluters interests.

The four failed votes put a spotlight on the separate special interests seeking their own particular version of a rollback.

1. An amendment offered by Senator Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) (Amendment 183) was supported by the oil industry because it would allow their refineries to continue to spew unlimited carbon pollution. It failed to get the needed 60 votes (a vote of 50 to 50) despite the [oil industry's campaign contributions](#), led by [Koch Industries](#) and Exxon-Mobil, totaling nearly \$28M in 2010. **At \$560,000 a vote, this was one expensive failure for Big Oil.** See how your Senators voted [here](#).

2. A separate amendment offered by Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) (Amendment 215) was a two-year "stop work" order on the EPA's carbon control efforts and supported by his home-state coal companies. It failed 12 to 88. In the 2010, [campaign contributions from the coal industry topped \\$7.3M](#) with Senator Rockefeller's co-sponsor and West Virginian colleague Senator Manchin (D-WV) by far topping the list. **In coughing up over \$608,000 a vote, Dirty Coal fared even worse than Big Oil.** See how your Senators voted [here](#).
3. Another amendment offered by Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) (Amendment 277) that sought a more nuanced form of a 2-year delay on EPA's enforcement of carbon limits designed to help manufacturers also failed 7 to 93. **The substance of this rollback amendment was not even enough to placate the [National Association of Manufactures and their \\$8.5M in 2010 lobbying expenditures](#).** See how your Senators voted [here](#).
4. Finally, an amendment offered by Senator Baucus (D-MT) (Amendment 236) trying to navigate the EPA's use of the [Clean Air Act](#) on agricultural facilities failed 7 to 93. This loophole amendment still couldn't garner the support of [the American Farm Bureau Federation, political contributor of nearly \\$700K](#) in the 2010 election cycle. **The Farm Bureau joined with the Koch Brother's [Americans for Prosperity](#) to seek an even broader attack on the EPA's ability to limit carbon pollution.** See how your Senators voted [here](#).

Simultaneously, the Senate's polluter compatriots in the House continued their own assault on the [Clean Air Act](#). Picking up where they left off in using the budget battle to gut EPA (see my previous blog [here](#)), the House is poised to pass Congressman Upton's [H.R. 910](#) later tonight - a bill that even overturns the [scientific finding that carbon pollution causes climate change](#).

As these special interest measures collided on the Senate floor and the House legislated away a scientific consensus, the public continued to look on with disgust. A recent poll confirms that 77 percent of Americans, including 61 percent of Republicans, believe that "Congress should let the EPA do its job." Only 18 percent believe that "Congress should block the EPA from updating pollution standards.

Luckily, 34 senators have actually chosen to stand up for the majority of Americans. They have introduced a resolution ([S. Res 119](#)) supporting the economic, environmental, and public health benefits of the Clean Air Act. And more than 150 House members took a similar stand in a [letter](#) released this week.

These numbers ensure that if the polluter dollars somehow are successful in an attempt to roll the [Clean Air Act](#) on either another bill or during the upcoming [budget battles](#) a Presidential veto of their dirty work would be upheld.