

MICHIGAN TRUTH SQUAD



“Rep. Tim Walberg is anti-clean air”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXzR7auAskQ>

Who: Sierra Club, Michigan Chapter, and the League of Conservation Voters

Featured material: TV and Internet ad

Truth Squad call: Flagrant foul

QUESTIONABLE STATEMENTS:

“If Congressman Walberg had succeeded in gutting the Clean Air Act, all these pollutants would be going, well, somewhere else.”

This statement refers to U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg, R-Tipton, voting to approve the Transparency in Regulatory Analysis of Impacts on the Nation Act of 2011, commonly known as the TRAIN Act.

The bill, passed by the House of Representatives in September 2011, would establish a special committee to review the Environmental Protection Agency’s rules and regulations and require the agency to consider the economic impact of new air quality rules.

The Senate is unlikely to pass the bill. President Barack Obama has threatened to veto it if the bill reaches his desk.

In the ad, baby food jars of arsenic, dioxin and mercury are shown and a man appears to be spoon-feeding arsenic to the baby. But the ad provides no evidence that unsafe levels of toxic chemicals would end up in baby food as a result of the legislation.

Link to the TRAIN Act, H.R. 2401: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:H.R.2401>:

Link to story on TRAIN Act passage in the House:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/183605-house-passes-bill-forcing-analysis-delay-of-epa-regulations>

“Walberg voted to let polluters release toxins that cause cancer, asthma attacks, heart attacks and even deaths. And some of those deaths would be very early.”

Another part of the TRAIN ACT would delay pending implementation of mercury from power plants and air pollution for several years after the special committee required by the legislation issues its report.

The EPA, environmentalists and some Democratic lawmakers have charged that delaying those rules will lead to tens of thousands of premature deaths, heart attacks and asthma attacks.

On Dec. 21, the EPA issued its first national standards that cut emissions of mercury and other toxins released from coal-fired power plants. Those rules have been delayed for 20 years because of political infighting in Washington.

The agency estimates that the new safeguards will prevent as many as 11,000 premature deaths and 4,700 heart attacks a year. It also says the standards will prevent 130,000 cases of childhood asthma symptom and about 6,300 fewer cases of acute bronchitis in children each year.

But Republicans claim the stringent pollution standards could cause so many old power plants to shut down that the reliability of the nation’s electric grid could be compromised.

Link to EPA news release:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/bd4379a92ceceeac8525735900400c27/bd8b3f37edf5716d8525796d005dd086!OpenDocument>

Link to news story about on the EPA’s issuance of power plant rules:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/200873-obama-gop-split-on-power-plant-mercury-rules>

In the ad against Walberg, the camera zooms in on the face of a baby as the announcer says that some of the air pollution deaths would be “very early.” But no one has suggested that delaying mercury and air pollution rules would kill babies.

OVERALL IMPRESSION:

This ad is designed to shock viewers about Republicans’ efforts to alter federal air quality standards. The Sierra Club has been running similar ads across the county targeting Republican lawmakers who have voted on various bills designed to restrict the power of the EPA.

Bashing the EPA also has been a common tactic of most Republican presidential candidates in their primary campaigns.

FOUL OR NO FOUL: Flagrant foul for suggesting, without any evidence, that toxic chemicals emanating from power plants and factories could kill babies.