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House of Representatives

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Opening Statement

Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney

“A Threat to America’s Children: The Trump Administration’s Proposal to Undermine Protections from Mercury Air Toxics Standards”

Subcommittee on Environment

Thursday, February 6, 2020

Good afternoon. Thank you all for coming today. As Chairwoman of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, I first want to thank my colleague Harley Rouda, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Environment, for convening this hearing on the administration’s efforts to undermine protections from the Mercury Air Toxics Standards (MATS) rule. This is the last hearing in a series of four hearings that have taken place over the course of two days that examine the negative effects of the Trump Administration’s poverty, housing, hunger, and health regulations on children.

The MATS rule protects our health, and our children’s health – plain and simple. And you do not have to just take my word for it, we can look to the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) own statements to prove this. According to the EPA’s *own* calculations, the MATS rule prevents up to 11,000 premature deaths, 4,700 heart attacks, 130,000 asthma attacks, and up to 540,000 missed work or sick days each year.

So, you see, there is no ambiguity here — we factually know that mercury and air pollutants are bad for human health. We also know that the Administration’s effort to gut mercury air toxics standards will harm children’s health, and will result in increased occurrences of childhood asthma and babies born with developmental disabilities. Any efforts to modify mercury standards should reduce environmental toxicity and improve children’s health and life outcomes — but the Administration is proposing to do the exact opposite.

What this series of hearings has uncovered is that this Administration is engaging in an unforgivable attack on children — which, as we have also seen in these hearings, is both unprecedented and systemic. It is our job in Congress to shine a spotlight on these egregious regulations, and we will continue to do just that. I encourage my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, to work alongside me in protecting our children’s future.

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