

Chairman Blake Farenthold
Opening Statement
Subcommittees on Interior, Energy and the Environment and
Intergovernmental Affairs
Joint Hearing
“Regulatory Reform Task Forces Check-In Part: III”
Wednesday, November 29, 2017

Today we are going to continue our work on agencies' Regulatory Reform Task Forces and welcome representatives from the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of the Energy, to provide us with an update on their rollback of excessive, duplicative, and outdated regulations.

Earlier this year, President Trump issued Executive Orders 13771 and 13777 as part of a push to reduce the burdens that federal regulators impose upon Americans. These Executive Orders required federal agencies to repeal two regulations for every one new regulation they would like to impose. To help meet this requirement, the orders directed federal agencies to establish a Regulatory Reform Task Force to review regulations and identify those that are unnecessary, impose excessive costs, or limit job growth.

Over the last two months the committee has heard from a number of agencies about the progress they have made on implementing these executive orders and their unprecedented efforts to take a look at how our government regulates. My colleagues and I were encouraged by what we heard. For example, the Department of Education's Task force uncovered a whopping 1,772 guidance documents, 600 of which were out of date or interpreting laws that were no longer in effect.

The Department of Agriculture reported that during its first round of review, its Task Force, composed almost entirely of career staff, identified over 275 regulatory and administrative recommendations to increase agency efficiency and reduce duplication.

Agencies also testified how they have been able to reduce the cost and burden of their regulations while not compromising important health and safety considerations.

For example, the folks from the Department of Health and Human Services testified how they are fulfilling their mission to remove burdens on the patient-provider relationship. HHS personnel are also reassessing healthcare quality measures to ensure a focus on safety.

Department of Transportation representatives testified that as a result of their review DOT is reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens and barriers to new technologies, and saving the American public significant time and money, while actually improving the safety and benefits of its regulations.

This check on the massive regulatory state is long overdue. Our hard working American taxpayers, land owners, small businesses, and individual consumers-are counting on these agencies to get it right. As such, I am confident my colleagues will respect the value of these agencies' efforts and our witnesses' time, and please remain focused on helping the Committee evaluate the work of these Task Forces.

To our witnesses today, I look forward to hearing about what your Task Forces have accomplished, and how your work will encourage a more productive relationship with the regulated community, facilitate safe utilization of our resources, and incorporate the voices of our states, localities, and tribes, and most importantly save the American people time, money, and frustration.