



July 27, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 2.4 million members and activists, the Natural Resources Defense Council urges you to oppose H.R. 427, the “Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2015” (REINS) that is scheduled for floor debate this week. The REINS Act is [one of the most radical bills](#) of the 114th Congress and represents an [unprecedented threat to our government’s ability to protect the public from harm](#). The legislation would delay or shut down the development of critical new health and safety protections, obstructing actions that Congress has already mandated by law. It will effectively shut down the regulatory system that protects the public’s safety and health and return to a 19th Century system that was an utter failure.

REINS would require both houses of Congress to approve every major rule, with no alterations, within a 70-day window. If either chamber is unable or unwilling to approve a major rule, it could not take effect. This would undo more than 100 years of policy and allow just one chamber of Congress to block the enforcement of laws that Congress has already passed.

The impact on all major rules, including the large number of non-controversial rules agencies produce every year, would be dramatic and destructive. Currently, agencies often take several years to formulate a particular safeguard, reviewing hundreds of scientific studies, empaneling expert advisors, gathering thousands of public comments, and going through many levels of executive branch review. For example, efficiency standards that DOE completed in 2014 alone will save consumers and businesses about \$78 billion on electricity bills by 2030 and cut carbon pollution by 435 million metric tons. Under the REINS Act, Congress, with its limited staff and its broad agenda, would have 70 days to second-guess each and every major agency decision.

For more than a century—going back at least to the creation of the Food and Drug Administration—Congress, has established federal agencies and empowered them to make decisions, subject to public input and comment, to protect the public. Congress rightly concluded that some kinds of decisions required deep technical

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expertise and a balanced, judicious decision process somewhat insulated from political horse-trading and power plays. REINS would instead make Congress the arbiter of every technical, scientific and economic question and business dispute. Under the current system, Congress still plays the central role by writing the laws that set the parameters for regulatory actions, and it has numerous tools to block or alter regulations. What Congress cannot do now is stymie the entire system of protecting Americans by inaction, deadlock or stalemate. And it does not have to inject itself into every dispute between businesses or scientific or technical decision. The REINS Act is not an effort to improve or streamline the regulatory system. Instead, it would cut out the heart of our nation's system of public safeguards and obstruct law enforcement. The public would be less protected, and the political system more abused. Congress should be seeking ways to ensure federal agencies enforce the law, not seeking ways to prevent it.

Sincerely,

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