



Before the House Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee
Interested Party Testimony on House Concurrent Resolution 4
May 9, 2017

Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee, my name is Zachary Frymier and I am the Director of Energy and Environmental Policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. I am here today to testify as an interested party on House Concurrent Resolution 4 (HCR 4).

The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate and we represent nearly 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

Ohio's use of E-Check as a condition for registering motor vehicles in certain counties stretches back to 1993 when Ohio was forced to respond to a tightened federal Clean Air Act. The Ohio Chamber has supported its use as a cost-effective means of meeting federal air quality standards and has worked throughout the past two decades to guard against restricting the appropriate use of this extremely important compliance tool and forcing damaging emission reductions onto Ohio businesses.

In 2015, U.S. EPA once again changed the definition of what "clean" air means in their eyes. The agency ignored Ohio's 30-year record of improved air quality and again lowered the ozone limit, this time to 70 parts per billion, all while knowing that Ohio only recently came into compliance with standards that were tightened in the last decade. The industrial Midwest, including Ohio, is one of the areas of the country most negatively impacted by the 2015 rulemaking. U.S. EPA's own estimates show that 34 Ohio counties will violate the new standard once it is implemented.

Congressional action to prevent the damage the 2015 standards will cause is the best way to ensure the appropriate balance is struck between protecting the environment and growing the economy. In the meantime, however, litigation challenging U.S. EPA continues to work its way through the courts.

While we certainly would like to see the new standards reversed, retaining the use of cost-effective compliance tools such as E-Check remains vital. In the event that the state discontinues the use of E-Check while still having to comply with the 2015 standards, economic growth and the ability to create jobs would be threatened by increased environmental controls on the business sector.

As committee hearings continue on HCR 4, the Ohio Chamber urges you to remember the necessity of retaining Ohio's ability to implement cost-effective compliance tools such as E-Check in the face of ever-tightening federal air quality standards. Thank you.