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The Price of Deregulation

Earlier this year, EPA Administrator Zeldin vowed to drive [*“a dagger straight into the heart of the climate change religion.”*](#) He promised to lower the cost of living, unleash American energy, and bring back jobs. How would he accomplish that? Through deregulation.

Earlier this month, he accomplished a major goal on his deregulation agenda by rolling back the Endangerment Finding. With overwhelming [scientific evidence that human actions cause climate change](#) and endanger [public health](#), the Endangerment Finding required the EPA to take action under the Clean Air Act to curb emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, and four other heat-trapping air pollutants from vehicles, power plants, and other industries.

Serving as the basis for pollution regulation and climate action, the Endangerment Finding held our nation accountable. It was sensible regulation, acting as a code of conduct, protecting all Americans. Now we are even more vulnerable to an unregulated market approach that prioritizes profit – and deregulation – over people and planet. This line of thought fails to acknowledge that a robust economy depends on a balance of all three.

This, and other [actions](#) by Zeldin, work to dismantle common sense safeguards that protect families, our environment, and our communities. His actions have not been thoughtful, targeted improvements that protect the environment while reducing unnecessary barriers. Instead, they rely on an overly aggressive, sweeping approach. We must balance economic ambition with environmental and human protections.

We may never achieve 100% renewable energy, but we must work to reduce the burden that the fossil fuel industry places on our communities. We may not eliminate every industry-created greenhouse gas from reaching the atmosphere, but we can work to limit the amount of pollution we create. The long term sustainability of our economy and our public health depend on striving towards these forward thinking goals. And we must champion science and practical regulations that protect our land, air, water, and health.

Since the '70s, the EPA has taken [significant steps](#) to protect human health and our environment. Take for example the EPA Energy Star program which has brought energy efficient appliances to our homes, empowering consumers to [save billions of dollars in energy costs](#). Or the Brownfield Cleanup Program that has revitalized blighted communities. Without science-based, strategically targeted regulations and incentives such as these, pollution from coal plants will continue to billow into our air, and health risks in our inner-city neighborhoods and beyond will continue to climb.

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Yes, we should constantly evolve regulations that are overly burdensome, poorly implemented, or full of loopholes. But we can't lose sight of the goal: a system that balances people, planet, and profit.

Sincerely,
Peter Laing,

Managing Member of MAWBY Winery and
Vineyards in Traverse City and Co-Chair of
the Great Lakes Business Network.