



US Government Image

Lisa Jackson Leaving EPA and Path of Economic Destruction

By Steve Goreham

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Lisa Jackson, President Obama's chief of the Environmental Protection Agency, [resigned](#) last week. For four years she led our nation down a regulatory path of economic destruction unmatched in the 40-year history of the EPA. New regulations from Ms. Jackson's reign of terror impact power plants, industrial plants, refineries, and vehicles, as well as the cost of almost all goods and services. Unless her policies are rolled back, Americans will pay for decades with higher energy prices, job losses, and economic stagnation in exchange for negligible environmental benefits.

In January 2008 during his first presidential campaign, President Obama [stated](#) "So if somebody wants to build a coal-fired plant they can. It's just that it will bankrupt them because they're going to be charged a huge sum for all that greenhouse gas that's being emitted." When cap-and-trade legislation failed in Congress in 2010, Ms. Jackson became Obama's instrument to destroy the US coal-fired utility industry.

President Obama and Lisa Jackson put faith in Climatism, the belief that man-made greenhouse gases are destroying the planet. They trust NASA scientist James Hansen, who has [characterized](#) coal plants as "factories of death." Therefore, any and all means must be used to eliminate coal plants and other greenhouse gas sources.

Since 2009, the EPA has pursued limits on greenhouse gas emissions. In July 2012, the EPA [proposed](#) a limit of 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions per megawatt of electricity generated for new plants. This limit would prevent construction of coal plants unless "carbon capture" is used, an unproven and expensive technology.

The EPA's Cross-State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) was [finalized](#) in July 2011, seeking new stringent reductions in sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from power plants. Since 1970, US emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide have fallen by 56 percent and 40 percent respectively, and continue to fall to low parts-per-billion levels, even though electricity output from coal is higher. But the EPA ignored the ongoing progress, speculating that new regulations were necessary to save hundreds of billions of dollars in health care costs. Up to 576 coal-fired power plants may need [retrofit](#) to meet the new standards at a cost approaching \$120 billion.

In February 2012, the EPA [finalized](#) the Utility MACT (Maximum Achievable Control Technology), the first ever regulation of power plant emissions of mercury. Ms. Jackson [announced](#) the rule at the National Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C., stating that the rule would "protect our children." While exploiting children in her announcement, she failed to mention that US mercury emissions were [down](#) almost 60 percent from the early 1990s and continue to fall. Nor did she mention that natural emissions of mercury from volcanoes, geysers, and deep-sea vents are 100 times [larger](#) than emissions from US power plants. If all mercury emissions are halted from US utilities, the effect on children will be too small to detect. But the Electric Reliability Coordinating Council [places](#) the regulation cost at up to \$100 billion *per year*.

Coal-fired power plants [generated](#) 42 percent of US electricity in 2011. More than twenty states receive at least 50 percent of their electricity from coal plants. The destruction of the coal utility industry will boost the price of electricity for consumers and raise the cost of all goods and services that use electricity.

Other major EPA regulations have been hastily introduced with high estimated implementation costs, often in conflict with state regulations. Ms. Jackson's team proposed to [designate](#) coal ash as a hazardous substance (cost over \$50 billion), despite the fact that 40 percent of coal ash is recycled into bricks, drywall, asphalt and cement. The EPA headquarters was built with cement containing coal ash. The EPA [issued](#) a rule to regulate emissions from industrial boilers (cost of \$10s of billions). The EPA and the Department of Transportation [established](#) new vehicle mileage requirements, boosting automobile standards from today's 26 miles per gallon (mpg) to 54.5 mpg by the year 2025 (bye-bye minivan). Regulation of hydraulic fracturing of natural gas is next on the ever-expanding EPA regulatory plate, despite the fact that fracking is already covered by other state and federal statutes. The EPA even [considered](#) regulations on dust emissions from farms.

Expected economic losses from EPA regulation are huge. US Gross Domestic Product could be [reduced](#) each year, with losses peaking at \$500 billion by 2030. Employment could drop by 2.5 million jobs. Household incomes could decline by \$1,200 annually. Low income families, with utility costs a higher share of the household budget, would be

hit hardest.

The United States has some of the cleanest air and water in the world, both much improved during the last 50 years. The greatest air pollution risk to the average citizen is smoke from their fireplace or campfire. Suppose we step back from the Jackson path of destruction and re-establish common sense in our environmental policy?

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