



January 7, 2016

Re: Vote no on H.R. 712

Dear Representative,

The Coalition of Sensible Safeguards (CSS), an alliance of more than 150 labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, environmental, consumer and public interest groups strongly opposes H.R. 712, to be voted in the House today or tomorrow.

H.R. 712 offers a trifecta of harmful ideas, all designed to weaken public protections and to benefit corporations that wish to gut, cut and delay regulations. They represent cynical attempts to game the system in ways that only benefit corporations, and imperil the American public.

Title 1 is the Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act, more commonly known as Sue and Settle. The bill would propose lengthy, costly and unnecessary burdens on a process that permits members of the public to sue a federal agency that is not enforcing existing regulations and is failing to fulfill its obligations to the American people.

It would empower those opposed to certain public protections to postpone agency action, even when agencies are violating deadlines imposed by Congress.

H.R. 712 also is based on a false premise. The Government Accountability Office has found no evidence that settlements in major EPA rulemakings affected the content of the final rules.

Title II, H.R. 1759, "All Economic Regulations are Transparent Act" (ALERT), uses "transparency" as a weapon to ensure that companies are able to postpone the enactment of crucial public protections for months if not years. Except under certain limited circumstances, important rules protecting public health, safety and the welfare of American families would be required to be posted online by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs for six months or longer. If OIRA fails to act promptly, the delays could far exceed six months.

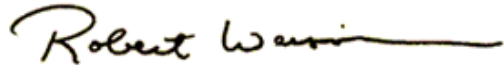
ALERT also imposes costly, burdensome and unnecessary reporting requirements on OIRA, and distorts the communication of information to the public by requiring it to report only the costs of compliance to business, directing it to omit the estimated monetary benefits of regulations.

Title III, H.R. 690, "Providing Accountability Through Transparency," might be the most cynical ploy to sabotage public protections. It would require a 100-word summary of a proposed regulation that could be challenged in court. Agencies already provide summaries for their often highly complex rules, affecting all manner of technical and scientific subjects. To make these

summaries potentially subject to judicial review opens the door to deep-pocketed special interests taking agencies to court over the wrong syntax, an omitted phrase, or in-apt word.

H.R. 712 is an assault on the public protections and safeguards required by the laws Congress passed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all Americans. It would waste the limited time and resources of agencies, courts, and the American public. We strongly urge you to oppose this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Weissman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Weissman, President  
Public Citizen  
Chair, Coalition for Sensible Safeguards

*The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards is an alliance of consumer, labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups, as well as concerned individuals, joined in the belief that our country's system of regulatory safeguards provides a stable framework that secures our quality of life and paves the way for a sound economy that benefits us all.*