

"Fishing may be the most relaxing pastime we have in Missouri. There's something peaceful about being in nature, everything perfectly quiet except for the whirring of a fishing reel. The water on the lake is still, and even the sun comes up slowly to avoid disturbing the scene.

You might find nothing wrong in this picture, but leave it to the bureaucrats at the EPA to see danger in every moment a sportsman or sportswoman spends fishing in Southern Missouri. The agency is presently deciding whether to pursue regulations to stop the use of lead fishing sinkers and other fishing tackle.

If you think there are better uses of the EPA's resources, then I'll be the first to agree with you. This regulation, at the behest of extreme environmental groups, would cripple the fishing and tourism industry (greatly reducing Americans' ability to enjoy the natural beauty of our surroundings in the process). A lead sinker for fishing costs around five cents, while a tungsten fishing weight will set the average fisherman back \$4. Every time you cut your line, \$4 stays on the bottom of the stream.

The effect on recreational fishing would be significant, and these regulations would dramatically reduce the enjoyment of spending one of those relaxed pre-dawn mornings attempting to catch your own lunch. People come from all over our state to fish in Southern Missouri waters. They are an important part of our economy, and fishing is an important part of our sporting culture in Missouri.

Our economy and heritage are insignificant to the EPA. Instead of promoting our great outdoors, the agency will consider whether it would like to regulate our great outdoors. It's an important indication of how an out-of-touch administration truly feels about the way of life in places like Southern Missouri and how some of us make a living. Add the regulation of fishing tackle to other EPA projects which threaten Missouri jobs and small businesses. Cap-and-Trade would cost Missouri thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity. Ozone endangerment findings in counties where there is no apparatus to measure air pollution would punish agriculture and manufacturing. Removing wood waste as a renewable resource stifles new efficient energy technologies in our state. And EPA regulations presume to treat milk and oil in the same way - as toxic substances requiring our dairies to construct costly spill prevention and response plans.

EPA has earned a skeptical place in our hearts with these new efforts. An agency with a mandate to enforce congressional directives on clean air and water has overreached to the point where EPA regulates first and asks questions later. In fact, on Cap-and-Trade, EPA is proceeding with regulations whether or not Congress ever passes a law authorizing them to do so.

I can think of no federal agency that better demonstrates what happens when a too-big government loses its accountability to the people it is supposed to keep safe. I'd like us to be able to keep fishing, and I'd like the EPA to go jump in a lake."

