

Holding Scott Brown Responsible



by Alan
Palm

Editor's Note: This is an opinion article and New Bedford Guide does not side with any individual political belief.

Back in April Senator Scott Brown voted for a bill that would, for the first time in the forty year history of the Clean Air Act, forbid the EPA from regulating a pollutant that poses a clear threat to public health and welfare. Thankfully that bill did not pass, but Scott Brown showed us where his loyalty lies.

The Clean Air Act defines the EPA's responsibility to protect people from air pollution and has been strengthened with bi-partisan support for forty years. According to a recent study by the EPA:

"...in 2010 alone, the Clean Air Act prevented: 160,000 premature deaths; 1.7 million instances of worsened asthma; 54,000 cases of chronic bronchitis; and 41,000 respiratory and 45,000 cardiovascular hospital admissions." The study also states that the direct monetary benefits from the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments are estimated to reach almost \$2 trillion for the year 2020, a figure that dwarfs the direct costs of implementation (\$65 billion).

Senator Brown also voted for two extreme amendments that would

block the EPA from regulating greenhouse gases. The **McConnell Amendment**, which denies man-made global warming even exists and would have permanently prohibited the EPA from regulating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, is extremist legislation that literally denies the science of climate change introduced by Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK).

The **Rockefeller Amendment**, introduced by Sen. Jay Rockefeller's (D-WV), would put a two-year moratorium the regulation of GHG from coal-fired power plants, oil refineries and other stationary sources. Thankfully this amendment failed by a 12-88 vote. If these amendments had passed, for the first time in the forty year history of the Clean Air Act they would have forbid EPA from regulating pollutants that pose a clear threat to public health and welfare.



Ironically, it was this very Commonwealth that went to the Supreme Court in the case Massachusetts v. EPA to demand that the EPA regulate greenhouse gases in the first place. Greenhouse gases are the main cause of climate change.

For decades there has been a clear scientific consensus that climate change is real, that it's caused by people, and the longer we wait to act the worse the consequences will be. There is no debate among climate scientists. This is clearly expressed in the writing of nearly every major scientific body from the National Academy of Sciences, to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to NASA.

Sadly, but predictably, the fossil fuel industry has invested millions in PR campaigns to intentionally sow doubt in the minds of the American people, to stall us from taking action

that would protect our future, because such action would impinge upon their profits.

Why would Senator Brown cast a vote that threatens the health of our communities and the livability of our planet?

Perhaps the \$1,907,988 that dirty energy companies and their corporate front groups have poured into his campaign has something to do with it? Senator Brown has demonstrated that he is beholden to the fossil fuel industry and will put their profits before the health and welfare of our people. It's shameful.

So then what recourse do we have as until the next election?

For one we can let the people of Massachusetts know what Senator Brown is up to and hold him accountable. I just donated to 350.org (*check out the animation from their website to see what they're all about*) to fund an advertisement that connects the bad vote our Senator took on the Clean Air Act with the money he accepted from big polluters.

If 350.org can raise \$1500 by the end of this week, the ads will go up in T stations around Boston to remind voters riding public transit that their Senator voted against environmental regulations that the majority of people support.

We've got to show Scott Brown that we noticed, that we're paying attention, and that we vote. There is no one else besides us, the citizens of Massachusetts, to hold Scott Brown accountable for his actions.

For more information, please visit 350.org, and whichsideareyouon.org.