Manufacturers have routinely found themselves at odds with the outgoing Obama Administration — even in these last few days — because they continue to hammer us with regulations that lack critical balance. Just in the past two weeks the Administration seems determined to push the limits of the President’s regulatory power: a massive stream buffer regulation that effectively bans coal mining, followed by a legally tenuous decision to indefinitely ban offshore oil and gas leasing in Alaska and the Atlantic, and lastly a chemical storage regulation that imposes major costs but would not actually solve the problem (a Texas fertilizer plant explosion) it was designed to prevent. When these are layered on top of massive, billion-dollar regulations like the Clean Power Plan, Waters of the U.S., Ozone, PM2.5, Boiler MACT and Utility MACT, the picture comes clearly into focus: the Obama Administration is capping eight solid years of overregulation with a final backbreaking few weeks of the worst of the worst.

Throughout, manufacturers have been confronted with regulations
where costs greatly exceeded their benefits, a government picking winners and losers in terms of energy sources, caused mass closings of power plants in the Rust Belt and across the Southern U.S., and forced manufacturers to divert capital to environmental compliance that they should have been using to innovate and create new products.

Well, we are now hopeful this is about to change.

The NAM recently cheered the announcement of Attorney General Scott Pruitt for Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). NAM President and CEO Jay Timmons said AG Pruitt’s nomination made him “hopeful the next administration will strike the right balance between environmental stewardship and economic growth.”

Our Competing To Win white papers for environment and energy lay out a bold agenda for the new EPA Administrator, and call on that person to issue policies that protect health, safety and jobs. We call for regulations—on air, water, waste and chemicals and even greenhouse gases—but we want them to be done better and in a more balanced way.

We are confident AG Pruitt will bring balance to the EPA regulatory agenda. Manufacturers have stood side-by-side with AG Pruitt as we challenged the EPA’s Clean Power Plan, its Waters of the U.S. Regulation, and its 2015 Ozone standard. In all three cases, manufacturers asked for regulations
we could live with—and when we didn't get them, we were forced to sue. AG Pruitt did the same for the citizens of Oklahoma.

We encourage the Senate to move swiftly in confirming his nomination so this important agenda can begin on day one.

The environment has improved dramatically over the past 40 years. And we believe the EPA plays an important role in preserving the environment by supporting clear, smart regulations that encourage responsible use of our natural resources while keeping energy prices low. Not at the cost of the economy, like we have seen over the last 8 years.

It's a win-win for manufacturers and the communities they support. We look forward to working with AG Pruitt on day one to achieve this.

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Ross Eisenberg
Vice President at National Association of Manufacturers

Ross Eisenberg is vice president of energy and resources policy at the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). Mr. Eisenberg oversees the NAM's energy and
environmental policy work and has expertise on issues ranging from energy production and use to air and water quality, climate change, energy efficiency and environmental regulation. He is a key voice for manufacturing on Capitol Hill, at federal agencies and across all forms of media.
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