Texas Takes Legal Action Against EPA Mandates

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Good morning and thank you all for being here today. I want to thank Attorney General Greg Abbott and Commissioner Todd Staples for joining us in this defense of hardworking Texans.

Around the world, Texas has a well-deserved reputation as a rich source of traditional fuels. Thanks to bountiful natural resources and an entrepreneurial culture, we have been providing energy for our nation and world for almost as long as there has been a Texas.

As a result, we understand that those traditional energy sources are an essential part of any viable energy strategy to meet the needs of our state and nation.

Unfortunately, the powers-that-be in Washington are anxious to usher in a “new era” by tearing down the old one, using sweeping mandates and draconian punishments, to force the square peg of their vision, into the round hole of reality. In the process, they are preparing to undo decades of progress, while painting hardworking entrepreneurs as selfish, and destroying hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Before they go any farther, I would invite folks in Washington to take an honest look at our state’s success, with our all-of-the-above energy strategy, and the reliable power supply and environmental improvements that have resulted.

They would see wind turbines dotting the plains of West Texas, one of the nation's largest biomass power plants under construction in Nacogdoches, a bio-refinery in Freeport that will use algae to convert wastewater and CO2 into energy, and vast supplies of domestic...
energy being unlocked across Texas. They would also see we've reduced nitrogen oxide emissions 46%, cut ozone levels 22%, and watched our CO2 emissions fall farther than nearly every other state's.

While that energy revolution unfolded, Texas created more private sector jobs than any other state in the union, and attracted major employers in the midst of a national recession.

I credit our success to decisions based on sound business principles, not ever-changing government mandates, or the fear of extravagant fines. In Texas, we're making tomorrow's technologies more accessible, by offering incentives to make them more affordable, cultivating a job-friendly climate, then getting government out of the way.

I think the results speak for themselves.

Today, Texas produces more wind power than any state in the union, and more than all but four countries in the world. Texas is also investing heavily in solar energy, with three utility-scale solar projects scheduled to begin construction soon, and others like them in the development process.

Eleven utility companies are currently providing rebates for residential and commercial customers who install solar energy systems.

Texas is the very picture of a state aggressively seeking its future in alternative energy...through incentives and innovation, not mandates and overreaching regulation.

When the EPA recently declared carbon dioxide a toxic substance, they put countless businesses, farms and even large churches in their crosshairs, and began a process that will not only devastate our state's strong economy, but also raise energy prices for the rest of the nation.

Their misguided plan paints a big target on the backs of Texas energy producers and the nearly 200,000 Texans they employ.

It is unacceptable to trade those jobs for compliance with a more stringent standard that was driven by a flawed process at the EPA, and based on the tainted data of an agenda-driven international panel.

Last summer, we objected to the EPA's plan, explaining how their decision would hurt Texas farmers and ranchers, and interfere with efforts to continue developing renewable energy sources across our state.

As evidence has accumulated over the past few weeks, undermining the objectivity, independence and validity of the EPA's assessment, my office has worked closely with General Abbott in considering all options to challenge this seriously flawed EPA finding, and uniting to head off an economic calamity.

Today, the State of Texas is taking its challenge to the EPA's Findings for CO2 and other greenhouse gases to federal court.

This legal action is being taken to protect the Texas economy and the jobs that go with it, and defend Texas' environmental successes against this federal overreach.