

Washington, D.C. -- Congressman Jeff Fortenberry is calling on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reconsider any plans it might have to change existing regulations involving farm dust.

"Farm dust is not industrial pollution," Fortenberry said. "Changing the existing dust rules is an overreach that has not been scientifically proven necessary. American farmers welcome the responsibility of being good stewards of our resources, but such a regulatory change would only appear to serve as an unfair and needless burden on those who grow our food and live in rural America."

As required every five years under the Clean Air Act, the EPA is reviewing its airborne pollutant standards for particles of industrial pollution, as well as slightly larger particles called "coarse particulate matter" that include dust. Fortenberry and other House Agriculture Committee members early this week expressed serious concerns on this matter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.

Fortenberry and his colleagues stated the following: "While we respect efforts for a clean and healthy environment, scientific studies do not support the need for revising the dust standard. We are hopeful that common sense will prevail and the EPA will refrain from causing extreme hardship to farmers, livestock producers, and other resource-based industries throughout rural America. Whether it is livestock kicking up dust, corn being combined, or a pickup driving down a gravel road, dust is a naturally-occurring event in rural areas. Common sense requires the EPA to acknowledge that the wind blows dust around in these areas, and that is a fact of life."

Fortenberry is a member of the House Agriculture Committee and the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

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