



April 16, 2012

The Honorable Ed Whitfield
United States House of Representatives
2368 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Whitfield:

On behalf of the 362,000 members of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I write in support of H.R. 4255, your “Accountability in Grants Act of 2012.” By amending the Clean Air Act to remove the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) authority to award money for activities that take place outside of the United States, H.R. 4255 helps to encourage better prioritization of taxpayer resources at home and abroad. With the national debt soaring to over \$15.6 trillion and counting, it is essential that we take a close look at how all programs function and seek out ways to cut nonessential spending.

Over the past ten years, the EPA has spent almost \$100 million on grants to foreign countries. This is admittedly a small part of the billions given in grants each year by the agency, but reexamining this approach is nonetheless an important first step toward reining in unfocused and out-of-control spending in Washington. Given the millions of taxpayers struggling to make ends meet, it is all the more difficult to justify spending scarce dollars on programs of questionable benefit to Americans, especially as some in Congress pursue tax hikes that would make matters worse for our economy.

Many grants have gone directly to foreign governments that should be expected to fund their own operations, such as \$718,000 to the China State Environmental Protection Administration to “assist China to meet the requirements of both the Stockholm and Long Range Transport of Air Pollutants Convention.” Another \$397,000 was awarded to the Ministry of Environment of the Kingdom of Jordan to support participation in “good governance capacity-building cooperation including training on inspections, criminal enforcement and judicial awareness raising.”

Other recipients include the United Nations, an organization to which American taxpayers are already the primary donor, and even Interpol, which received \$150,000 in support of a climate change project to “ensure that markets operate properly, and that fraud is detected promptly with regard to carbon trading.” Still other undertakings seem far more appropriate for private-sector investment, among them methane recovery and commercialization projects in countries like Ukraine.

While seeking to improve environmental conditions around the world is a worthy goal, the best way to pursue it while protecting taxpayers is to reduce barriers to free and open trade. By improving the *economic* situation of allies overseas we will simultaneously improve their ability to enact *environmental* protections with their own resources. Washington needs to increase accountability at every level of government to be a better steward of taxpayer funds. H.R. 4255 is a good place to start. NTU is pleased to endorse the Accountability in Grants Act of 2012, and we urge all Representatives to join you by co-sponsoring it.

Sincerely,

Nan Swift
Federal Affairs Manager