

MARSHA BLACKBURN

7TH DISTRICT, TENNESSEE

DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4207

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
217 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-2811

DISTRICT OFFICES:
7975 STAGE HILLS BOULEVARD
SUITE 1
MEMPHIS, TN 38133
TELEPHONE: (901) 382-5811

198 EAST MAIN STREET
SUITE 1
FRANKLIN, TN 37064
TELEPHONE: (615) 591-5161

1850 MEMORIAL DRIVE
CLARKSVILLE, TN 37043
TELEPHONE: (931) 503-0391

April 20, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President,

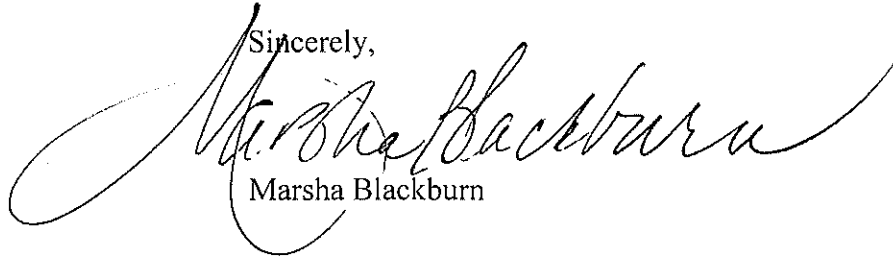
I write with deep concern about a contest sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). According to news reports and the EPA's own website, Americans are being asked to submit video entries describing the importance of the federal rulemaking process. This process often has a more direct impact on the daily lives of Americans than do the laws that Congress passes. As the EPA points out, federal regulations outnumber Congressionally passed laws by a factor of ten to one, yet both carry the same force. The EPA is correct to educate Americans about this process as it frequently results in bureaucratic overreach that conflicts with the will of Congress and interests of our constituents.

My concern with the contest is the use of taxpayer dollars as prize money. In an era of ever mounting debt, a \$2,500.00 prize for a YouTube video is truly not the best use of taxpayer dollars. I understand that in context of the trillions the federal government spends every year, \$2,500.00 seems inconsequential. As of this writing, it is only 0.0000000194% of the total federal debt. Washington spends fifty times this amount every second. We must remember however, \$2,500.00 is the total tax contribution for a working American making just under \$30,000 a year. Do you believe that taxpayer wants the entirety of his or her tax contribution to be given away as prize money for a YouTube video? I hope you will agree that the EPA should withdraw the offer of prize money in the knowledge that whoever wins this contest will have the "bragging rights" of having won a national contest and served their country. Let the \$2,500.00 go to offset the cost to farmers and small businesses of complying with EPA regulations. Better yet, apply it to the debt.

Regulatory overreach has generated much of the public anger in our county. Educating Americans about how they can participate in the rule making process is a public service, one that can help Americans who feel that they are not being heard on

important federal issues access an arena where they have truly been ignored. However, those same Americans are deeply concerned about government waste and debt. To offer a forum for input and accompany that offer with an example of the very waste that drives American's distrust of Washington is unfortunate. I urge you to instruct the EPA Administrator to rescind the offer of prize money and dedicate the funds to a better use.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marsha Blackburn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Marsha Blackburn