



## ARTBA Meets with EPA's Pruitt as Agency Changes Air Regulations

Last month, ARTBA attended a discussion of regulatory issues with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and senior agency officials. Pruitt focused on the EPA's continuing efforts to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens without sacrificing environmental goals. He highlighted the agency's "Smart Sectors program, which "provides a platform to collaborate with regulated sectors and develop sensible approaches that better protect the environment and public health."

The administrator's remarks show a real willingness by EPA to achieve a balance between retiring old and unnecessary regulations, which can delay transportation projects, while also continuing to protect the environment.

As an example, later the same day Pruitt released a memorandum implementing two significant changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) process—a review of six pollutants required every five years by the Clean Air Act. Counties that have trouble meeting the standards can have their federal highway funds withheld.

First, the memo directs that "background" levels of pollutants be considered when reviewing the NAAQS. ARTBA has long held that counties should not be penalized for pollution levels over which they have no control.

Second, the EPA now will also consider "adverse public health, welfare, social, economic or energy effects" that may result from altering existing NAAQS. This move directly addresses ARTBA's long-held concern that tightening NAAQS can threaten highway construction projects which reduce congestion and improve air quality.

*Source - ARTBA*