

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Power**  
**Hearing on the "U.S. Agricultural Sector Relief Act," and the**  
**"Asthma Inhalers Relief Act"**  
**July 18, 2012**  
*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

Today we will be holding a legislative hearing on the "U.S. Agricultural Sector Relief Act of 2012," and the "Asthma Inhalers Relief Act of 2012."

Both bills relate to aspects of implementing the Montreal Protocol. This international environmental treaty seeks to phase-out the use of ozone depleting substances, such as the CFCs that were once used in refrigerators, car air-conditioners, and other products.

One of the substances to be phased out is also the fumigant methyl bromide. While many farmers that once used methyl bromide have been able to switch to substitutes for certain purposes, for some specific uses – such as preparing the soil for growing strawberries, tomatoes or other crops – it is still needed.

I might add that another application where methyl bromide is important is in milling operations. My congressional district is the home of the Hopkinsville Milling Company who supports this legislation because they say it helps them ensure that they are able to meet clean food regulations. As we will hear from today's witnesses, it is still needed because there are no adequate substitutes available.

And it is for those critical uses that the U.S. Agricultural Sector Relief Act sets out a process to allow limited but continued availability of methyl bromide.

The amounts of methyl bromide at issue won't make even a dent in the continued declines of ozone depleting compounds in the atmosphere, but they will make a major difference for thousands of struggling farmers who don't see a future without it.

I would also like to say a word about the Asthma Inhalers Relief Act. As I mentioned, CFCs have been phased out, and a ban now also applies to the very small amounts of CFCs used in medical devices, including over-the-counter asthma inhalers. While these inhalers represent only a fraction of one percent of global CFC emissions, there is a ban on them that became effective at the end of last year. This bill simply allows the CFC inhalers already manufactured before the ban to be sold or distributed, providing a temporary supply for those asthmatics who would like the option to have them.

I look forward to the witnesses' testimony today on these pieces of legislation.

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