Hello. My name is Connie Luke and I’m here today to speak in support of EPA’s plans to reduce carbon pollution. When I was growing up on a farm in Iowa I heard a lot of messages which helped to form my belief that everyone is responsible to be good caretakers of our earth.

- Smoky the Bear said that “Only you can prevent forest fires”.
- Don’t be a litterbug signs were posted along the highway.
- Chief Iron Eyes Cody’s told me, “People Start Pollution. People can stop it.”
- The indigenouspeople.net website has a quote that sums it all up pretty well: “Treat the earth well. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children.”

Today, we don’t see as much trash on the roads, Cleveland’s Cuyahoga River isn’t burning, and new houses are no longer built with lead paint and asbestos. We have made some progress on treating the earth well, but when I look at the front range foothills from my home in Loveland, I often see how much work is needed to reduce air pollution. That brown haze that obscures my view is not what I want my daughter and granddaughter to be breathing. Coughing used to be something you heard in the winter when the annual cold/flu bug was spreading. Today, it’s impossible to go anywhere without hearing people coughing.

Opponents to the EPA plans will undoubtedly claim that it’s too expensive or impossible to the goals being set by EPA. They will rail against “the government” getting in their way and throw out the usual threat that jobs will be lost.

I remember the same arguments being made against the addition of automobile catalytic converters to reduce air pollution and against adding safety belts to reduce auto accident deaths. Those changes were too expensive, it would put auto makers out of business and people wouldn’t be able to afford to buy cars. Yet today, there are still lots of cars being sold and when you hear about a car accident, it’s generally the people not wearing seat belts who are dead.

President Kennedy set a goal for us to “send a man to the moon and bring him back alive”. Sounded impossible to many people – but we did it.

Last fall, Governor Hickenlooper set a goal for all major roads destroyed by the September floods to be repaired and back in service by December 1. Remembering how long it took to repair Hwy 34 after the 1976 flood, I thought that was an impossible goal. Yet, through the great teamwork between private, municipal, state, and federal resources those roads were open BEFORE December 1.

The time is now to stop the frightened, defeatist refusal to clean up our air and step up to our responsibility to do what we can to lead the world in improving the quality of the earth’s atmosphere for future generations.

I’m tired of hearing the whining about what “we can’t do”. Things are only impossible until someone does them.

Thank you.

Connie Luke
Email: garyconnie1234@msn.com