

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member, Committee on
Appropriations
S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member, Committee on
Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

May 17, 2017

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and local governments, we urge you to protect critical investments in the communities and working families most affected by America's declining demand for coal in the fiscal year 2018 (FY18) appropriations bills.

Communities from West Virginia to Colorado are working to build a bright economic future as we cope with the realities of a changing energy landscape. Despite the current challenges, these communities are home to rich assets, including our land, water, heritage, people, and many of our organizations and local governments are working to leverage these assets as we diversify and strengthen our local economies. For more than a century, coal communities have been instrumental in powering the national economy, and have made heavy sacrifices to provide cheap electricity for the nation. The shift in America's energy use has resulted in massive job losses in many of these communities and has left local economies struggling.

The Trump Administration's FY18 Budget Blueprint leaves coal communities and workers behind. It eliminates funding for critical federal agencies and programs that have been most active in targeting assistance to communities and workers adapting to shifts in energy generation, including the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Economic Development Administration (EDA) at the Department of Commerce, and a range of other federal programs.

Specifically, the FY18 Budget Blueprint eliminates all of the federal discretionary funding—or the entirety—of seven of the twelve federal offices and programs that, as part of the POWER Initiative, have coordinated economic and workforce development investments and other forms of assistance in those communities most in need of a diversified economy.

In addition to ARC and EDA, the FY18 Budget funding eliminations impact: USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service; the Department of Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund; the Department of Interior's Office of

Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement; the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership program at Commerce; the Corporation for National and Community Service; and the Small Business Administration's Regional Innovation Cluster Program. The total cuts to these programs are over \$1 billion – a total that will increase when the full FY18 Budget is released in May and the line item budgets of the five other POWER Initiative programs are detailed.

As part of the POWER Initiative, these programs invested roughly \$115 million in more than 130 projects in coal communities over the last two years. These projects are focused on growth industry sectors, including advanced manufacturing, sustainable agriculture, information technology, health care, and tourism and recreation. They fund badly needed infrastructure development, job and entrepreneurship training, economic development planning, business incubation and industry cluster strategies, and other vital services that are critical to the process of revitalizing and diversifying local and regional economies.

The expected impacts of the POWER Initiative are significant: ARC's investments alone are projected to create or retain more than 6,800 jobs, benefit more than 23,000 students and workers, and leverage nearly \$142 million into the Appalachian Region's economy.

Coal communities and workers have powered American homes and businesses for more than a century, and they deserve our support as America's energy landscape changes. Congress should fully fund the agencies and programs responsible for assisting coal communities in diversifying and growing their local economies and providing new opportunities for their workers. We urge you to support them.

Sincerely,

Amalgamated Bank
American Federation of Teachers
BlueGreen Alliance
National Association of Counties
National Association of Development Organizations
United Steelworkers
Utility Workers Union of America

Alabama

Shoals Entrepreneurial Center

Arizona

Northern Arizona Council of Governments

Illinois

Delta Institute

Kentucky

Appalachian Citizens' Law Center
Appalshop, Inc.
Big Sandy Community and Technical College
Bluegrass Solar Group, LLC
Center for Rural Strategies
Central Appalachian Network
City of Pikeville
City of Whitesburg
Community Farm Alliance
Community Ventures
Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program
Fahe
Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky
Green Forests Work
Green River Area Development District
Hazard Perry County Chamber of Commerce
Hindman Settlement School
Housing Development Alliance, Inc.
KEENStart
Kentuckians For The Commonwealth
Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation
Kentucky League of Cities, Inc.
Lake Cumberland Area Development District
Letcher County Fiscal Court
Maysville Community and Technical College
Morehead State University
Mountain Association for Community Economic Development
Mountain Comprehensive Care Center
Pennyrile Area Development District
Judge Executive Scott Alexander, Perry County Fiscal Court
Southeast Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
The Center for Rural Development
University of Pikeville
Philanthropic Capital Fund for Southeast Kentucky
Appalachian Horse Center

Maryland

City of Frostburg

The Greater Cumberland Committee

Montana

Montana State AFL-CIO

Northern Plains Resource Council

Western Organization of Resource Councils

New Mexico

Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

New York

Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology

Clean Air Coalition

Just Transition Fund

Kenmore Teachers Association

Kenmore Town of Tonawanda Chamber of Commerce

North Carolina

Appalachian Voices

Ohio

Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth

Hocking College

Ohio University

OsoMono LTD

Rural Action

Superior Marine Ways, Inc.

Pennsylvania

Aspire Grant & Development, LLC

Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds

Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism

UMWA Career Centers, Inc.

Tennessee

Campbell County Commission, TN

Launch Tennessee

Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment

Virginia

Appalachian Sustainable Development

Center for Natural Capital

Dialogue + Design Associates

United Mine Workers of America

Virginia Community Capital

West Virginia

Advantage Valley, Inc.

Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone of West Virginia

Coalfield Development

Conservation Legacy

Downstream Strategies

EntreEd, The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education

Hatfield McCoy Regional Recreation Authority

Natural Capital Investment Fund, Inc.

New River Gorge Regional Development Authority

New River Gorge Trails Alliance

PRIDE Community Services, Inc.

Region 4 Planning & Development Council

Region I Planning & Development Council

Solar Holler

Southern Appalachian Labor School

Strong Mountain Communities

The Alignment Group Healthcare

The Alliance for Appalachia

Unlimited Future, Inc.

Webster County Economic Development Authority

West Virginia State University Extension

West Virginia Community Development Hub

Wisconsin

Rain Source Capital, Inc.

Wyoming

Jackson Hole Center for Global Affairs

Powder River Basin Resource Council

cc: House and Senate Leadership