



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Hearing: Interior Public Witnesses
March 18, 2014
Introducing Charles Baird – As Prepared

Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding.

I am greatly honored to introduce to you one of my constituents from the 5th District in Kentucky – Mr. Charles Baird. Mr. Baird serves as the Chairman of Coal Operators and Associates (COA), a position he has held since 1987. Coal Operators and Associates represents 39 mine operators and 137 entities that provide goods and services to the mining industry all throughout central Appalachia. Mr. Baird and those he represents have experienced the War on Coal firsthand, and he understands better than most the challenges that coal producers in Appalachia are facing today. I am grateful that he has taken time to speak to this subcommittee.

Over the last several years, this Administration has engaged in a targeted dismantling of the coal industry in Appalachia. In Eastern Kentucky where I serve, we have lost nearly 9,000 coal jobs since the President took office. These are good jobs, paying on average \$60,000 a year from the start – enough to keep the lights on, support a family, and make plans for the future. But now, the jobs that have provided people in coal country with stability and security for 200 years are disappearing all around them.

A deluge of regulatory requirements from Washington is imposing tremendous expenses on coal operators. Large and small mining companies alike are being forced to choose between passing these costs along to their consumers and closing up shop – all in the name of a single-minded agenda. Hard working Americans in my District, who are willing to work day in and day out to provide this country with cheap reliable energy from coal, are being pointed toward the unemployment line by this Administration.

Despite this Administration's wrongheaded agenda, the fact remains: coal is the cheapest, most reliable source of energy, and this country needs it in order to keep the lights on. Without it, energy prices will rise and we will continue to face outages, brownouts, and blackouts every time a major cold front or storm hits.

I am proud of this hard working spirit that resides in my District, and that Mr. Baird represents. I am encouraged by their desire to provide this country with an energy source that keeps food on the table, utility bills low, and energy independence attainable. I know this Committee will continue to support them in these shared goals.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to introduce Mr. Baird to this subcommittee.

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