

Congressman H. Morgan Griffith  
9<sup>th</sup> District of Virginia  
Written Testimony for the Record  
Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee  
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Appalachian Regional Commission and Transportation Infrastructure Funding

One of the more important programs for my district that is funded under this appropriations bill is the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). ARC funding can be used for a variety of projects that directly benefit economic development in the Appalachian region through grants and contracts. This money has gone towards important initiatives in Appalachian communities, including expansion of broadband services, community planning, and roads. The projects this money funds are important to the success of Southwest Virginia.

Speaking specifically on road construction, the mountainous terrain of Appalachia can be more difficult to navigate, making highway projects more expensive and time consuming than they may be in other regions. Southwest Virginia is challenged in getting Federal funds for these projects due to state allocation formulas. ARC funding in Central Appalachia for our transportation initiatives, particularly the Coalfields Expressway as a Congressional High Priority Corridor, is especially critical. It is a high priority corridor, in part, because it opens up portions of Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky, all of which are ARC states.

The ability – or inability in many cases – to easily and safely travel through the 9<sup>th</sup> District dictates the success or challenges of economic development in many of my counties and independent cities. If a business cannot efficiently get in and out of the region to supply their shop, or attract additional business because through-traffic avoids the route through their town, it will continue to be a challenge to improve the economic outlook of our region. Highway projects serve as economic lifelines to towns across the country, bringing in commerce, tourism, and jobs.

Southwest Virginia deserves and needs expanded and improved highway access and ARC funding can help us realize these goals.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Fossil Energy

Many challenges Southwest Virginia has faced have come at the hands of federal regulations that have continued the War on Coal throughout Appalachia. Over the last several years, there have been numerous burdensome regulations on the coal industry and industries that burn coal. While we have worked with this administration to roll-back federal overreach and burdensome regulations impacting industry, it is also critical we ensure that coal-fired power plants and others dependent on coal have the technology required to meet the standards being imposed on them.

I have had many constructive discussions with folks throughout Southwest Virginia – from community and business leaders, to researchers and coal industry employees – as well as individuals from the Department of Energy. One thing is clear – there is a future for coal. This future for coal in many ways lies in the technologies being researched and developed by the Department of Energy’s Office of Fossil Energy. And coal research is just a part of the work that the Office of Fossil Energy does, with its efforts also focused on oil and gas domestic resources and management of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Funding through the Office of Fossil Energy has been critical in the development of advanced coal technologies. This funding will enable American fossil fuels and ingenuity in technological innovation to continue to prosper both domestically and abroad.

Let's figure out a way we can keep good-paying coal jobs. This is particularly true in economically distressed Southwest Virginia and Central Appalachia. It will also let us burn coal more cleanly. When you've lost as many jobs as my district has, we are going to need help to stabilize the situation. Funding for the Office of Fossil Energy can help achieve that goal.