

March 26, 2019

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur  
Chairwoman  
Energy and Water Development  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
Chairman  
Energy and Water Development  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
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Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Kaptur and Ranking Member Simpson:

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to highlight matters of great importance to my district and the country as you move forward in the appropriations process. I'd like to address the importance of research and development (R&D) funding at the Department of Energy (DOE) in general, and specifically at the Office of Fossil Energy (FE).

As this Congress continues to examine our global climate, it is imperative that any effective plan to counter climate change include our nation's vast supply of natural resources and our talent for technological innovation. Far more room exists for exploration and innovation in the energy space, and DOE plays an important role in this R&D.

During a recent district work period, I visited Virginia Tech where a team of experts is focusing on developing processes to extract rare earth elements from coal byproducts. A consortium of universities including Virginia Tech won a \$2 million grant from DOE last fall for a pilot project to test a hydrophobic-hydrophilic separation process to produce clean coal and specialty carbon products for discarded coal wastes. As a result of this research, they have also found a way to improve the quality of coal burned at steel plants. They are licensing this technology to Indian steel mills which will reduce their carbon footprint. This serves as just one example of how DOE R&D funding can be used in conjunction with our national labs and research universities to get projects like this off the ground.

I would love to see overall increases, but at the minimum parity between the amount of money appropriated for fossil energy research and other DOE research accounts— particularly with the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

A comprehensive “all of the above” energy policy must include robust funding for R&D at the federal level. These funds will continue to shorten the timeline it takes to ready many clean energy technologies for commercial use.

I would also like to share my support for work done by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), particularly on Appalachian highways programs.

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.

While I understand that funding for Appalachian highways programs, particularly the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS), is funded under the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations bill, ARC plays a critical role in administering the ADHS program. These highway projects serve as economic lifelines to towns throughout Central Appalachia, bringing in commerce, tourism, and jobs. I urge you to work with the Transportation Subcommittee and with ARC to ensure they have the resources needed to expand and improve highway access in Central Appalachia.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

H. MORGAN GRIFFITH  
Member of Congress