

Patrick B. Ford, Executive Director
Lebanon/Marion County Industrial Foundation

**Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
Hearing on
“Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: The Challenges Facing Frontline Communities”
November 20, 2019**

**Mr. Patrick B. Ford
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The Honorable John Shimkus (R-IL)

1. What can the Federal government do to improve the quality of technical assistance and financial support for communities that are suffering from a lack of outside investment?

RESPONSE: I will begin with technical assistance. The hierarchy in the USEPA, for which I have benefited and capitalized on, begins with a highly functioning, multi-tasking, knowledgeable, and responsive project manager (USEPA contact and, in our case, Joseph Nowak). It also included a supporting cast (within the USEPA organization), best characterized as the technical assistance team. In our case it was the Land Revitalization Team and headed by Christopher P. Thomas, Environmental Engineer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3, Team Leader, Land Revitalization Team, Hazardous Site Cleanup Division (3HS51), (215) 814-5555, thomas.christopher@epa.gov. What makes this combination of EPA Project Manager and EPA Land Revitalization Team so unique is the non-judgmental, non-accusatory, accessible, resourceful, knowledgeable way in which they managed our inquiries, projects, and ideas. We could bring projects, ideas, problems, obstacles, and needs to them without any fear of retribution.

The project manager, and our team, would include our state department of environmental protection and state brownfield assistance center in the problem solving, again, without any party having an interest in retribution or regulatory muscling. In fact, the EPA Land Revitalization Team would go through the effort of pulling all subject matter experts (brownfield, corrective action, legal, financial recovery, development, and funding) into one place at the regional headquarters (in our case Philadelphia). Our nonprofit agency would lay out our problem or opportunity and the EPA team would lay out a road map for voluntarily repurposing the property and a financial assistance road map to assist with the cost of cleanup and repurposing. Most importantly, this service is provided at NO CHARGE! To make it even sweeter, there are grants in the USEPA to PAY FOR 100% OF THE COST OF OUR TRAVEL AND EXPENSES TO MAKE THE TRIP!!!

What can the federal government do? REPLICATE what they are doing in Region 3 in all regions of the EPA. Additionally, broaden the use of the Targeted Brownfield Assistance (TBA) Program. This program is available all year and not just during an annual funding cycle like other funding programs at the EPA. Furthermore, maybe consider appropriating money for this program. TBAs are simply technical assistance and

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are available throughout the year for eligible projects. The application process is streamlined, organic, brief, and highly successful! Technical assistance is like oxygen. When you need it, you really need. You can't wait for a year to get it. The project generally dies if you have to wait a year.

The *funding assistance programs in the EPA* are robust and come with technical assistance. In fact, congress already amended the laws to allow non-profits, like the one I manage, to apply for EPA funding. THANK YOU! Also, congress amended the laws, at another request of ours, to expand the amount of dollars we can apply because of the real world experience we have in cleaning up our environment to create opportunities for economic development. THANK YOU! Any additional request would be selfish to request.

However, since you are a US Congressman, and are in a position to help, I will ask selfishly! Could you expand the eligible projects, for EPA funding, to demolition, debris removal, and construction for brownfield and RCRA sites? The reason is that it is still difficult, sometimes impossible and time consuming, to get other federal funding, from other federal agencies, when you do not have a Certificate of Completion (COC) from the state department of environmental protection. So, how can you get a certification of completion if you cannot remove the debris, with EPA money, and you don't have any other resources because they are prohibited to be used if you don't have a certificate of completion? Understand the dilemma? The other solution is to allow other federal agencies (EDA, DOT, HUD, SBA) to fund brownfields projects, without COCs or NFAs (No Further Actions), as long as they are in a state administrated VRP (Voluntary Remediation Program). Most states have VRP programs under different names.

2. Can you talk more about what you mean when you say “meaningful employment” as opposed to other forms of employment that don't offer the same opportunities?

RESPONSE: In my context, and my intent when using the terminology, I mean a family-sustaining wage for an employee. Obviously, this wage will vary for different locations around the country, based on the cost of living.

- a. How would you respond to environmental activists that talk about the need for your community members to “transition” away from jobs in energy, mining, agriculture, and the like?

RESPONSE: If anyone says we should transition away from agriculture, I would tell them to *stop eating the following items*: grains (and any other organic foods), pork (you might have to tell them that includes bacon), poultry (remind them that this includes eggs), dairy (remind them this includes milk and cheese), and beef (or anything else that has a pulse). Remind them that **Agriculture**, food, and related industries contributed \$1.053 trillion to U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) and US farms are \$133 billion of this amount. Your data folks may have to update this number (I believe my figures are from 2017). Also, tell them to stop wearing wool. Remind them that wool comes from animals on a farm, which is

included in agriculture. Forgive the hint of anger in my answer, and my lack of patience for people who want us to “transition away from agriculture,” my coffee is cold and I don’t want anyone taking away my weekly intake of biscuits, sausage gravy, scrambled cheese eggs, and sausage patties! Also, what would these people have us wear in the damp cold? Also, remind them to stop using carpeting, insulation and upholstery. Tell them to stop listening to pianos, or playing the piano, because wool felt covers piano hammers, and it is used to absorb odors and noise in heavy machinery and stereo speakers (which are in every home in the country).

Transition from energy? I will continue answering before I warm up my coffee, WITH ELECTRICITY!!! I believe my answer will be delivered with the honesty that it needs to be delivered. Where does electricity come from? Oh, ENERGY!!! When I hear people lobbying to get away from mining and petrochemical companies I lose my patience! Sorry, I will warm up my coffee shortly. I will keep my discussion of energy to petroleum and petrochemical.

Petroleum products include gasoline, distillates such as diesel fuel and heating oil, jet fuel, petrochemical feedstocks, waxes, lubricating oils, and asphalt. Tell them to stop using any mode of transportation that is powered by energy (including solar and battery powered transportation; because, guess what, the parts for these vehicles are made from, YES,...chemicals that have derivatives in, ...here it comes again...NATURAL GAS).

I will be as brief as possible on natural gas (another resource lumped into energy). Guess what “energy” is used to make? If someone wants to transition away from energy, or natural gas, then I would advise the civilized society to walk away from a doctor’s vitamin capsule and pharmaceuticals, cellphones, military parachutes, the military technology that is steering us away from parachuting on a large scale (I still want Navy Seals, Green Berets, and Marines to have parachutes to drop in on the bad people to continue kicking wholesale butt!), safety glasses for assembly line workers (because we STILL NEED TO MANUFACTURE SOMETHING TO SURVIVE), tires (I don’t see anyone going back to wood or stone wheels), toothpaste and toothbrushes, fishing rods (sorry, forgot we are supposed to transition away from this), refrigerators, artificial limbs for amputees (I am assuming there is a little compassion left in some people), paint brushes (Lord knows there will be a lot of painting going on, since all of our agriculture, energy, and mining jobs will be transitioned to other countries), paints, plastics (I ask you to look around you...how much stuff is made of plastic?), dentures (again, compassion please!), baby camera monitors, bandages (by the way, if you eliminate bandages, don’t use cloth, remember, that comes from wool or cotton--agriculture), insect repellants, crayons, golf balls (this doesn’t matter, since we won’t have any jobs, we won’t be able to afford to play golf), perfumes and lipsticks, cortisone, varnishes on my desk, and everything you see and touch in your vehicle and house.

IN ONE SERIOUS SENTENCE (however, I encourage anyone to refute what I just wrote): As long as the transition from these industry clusters that produce both quality goods and well-paying jobs remains an unfunded mandate (the transition, from repurposing buildings to retraining employees, from product creation to product delivery, will be costly), with no private backers or government incentives to make dollars available, how can this request be completed?? **In addition, I would recommend that environmentalists talk to the individuals whose livelihoods depend on these jobs. For better or worse, right now they are proud of their labor, proud of putting food on their families' tables, and deeply entrenched in their legacy of industry.** So the transition must include a well-managed cultural revolution as well. Who exactly among them will lead it?

3. What is your philosophy for balancing environmental protection and economic growth?

RESPONSE: I am not smart enough to have a “philosophy,” but I think you will have an idea where I stand on this question if you re-read my answer to #2. Congressman Shimkus, please, do not take my answers as any disrespect to you or your staff, but “philosophy” breaks down when you have the wolf at your door. For many of these communities, these industry clusters are all they have ever known, and they are proud of their heritage and legacy, even as the stand in unemployment lines. We have seen private industry prove over and over that it’s easier to relocate an entire operation overseas where labor is cheap and unregulated than it is for them to rethink and recreate their operations to remain on US soil. Why is it left to communities to balance environmental protection and economic growth – would this question be better posed to the manufacturers that would rather leave the nation hungry and homeless than address these very problems?

4. Can you talk more about the need to create “career highways” to new manufacturing jobs?

RESPONSE: In the past, it was possible for people to pick a profession and expect to benefit from a lifetime of employment from it. The expected lifespan of any career is as varied as the job and the economic times we are in. We must embrace personal and professional curiosity and aggressively seek out new ways to identify the interests and capacity of employees to want to develop new skills and, if the interest is there, to evolve into leadership and management if the skill and interest is within the employee.

5. Can you explain what makes grant programs from EPA “front end” or site ready money? What does this mean and why is it important?

RESPONSE: I define “front end” as the effort to prepare land for a building to be constructed or infrastructure to be installed. Before a building can be constructed, or road installed, it has to be prepared for the construction. The site has to be graded, a structure has to be removed, or utilities need to be brought to the site. Most of our country’s developable sites have some form of environmental contamination that must be removed

prior to constructing a building or installing infrastructure. If not, there is no chance of getting conventional financing or federal funding. There is only one source of money, from the federal government, for preparing a site for land development if it is contaminated. That source is the USEPA.

There is a reason why so many abandoned factories, power plants, mines, gas stations, and houses litter our landscape. No one wants to get on the chain of title for the environmental liability.

EPA front-end programs provide a greater return on private investment, for every public dollar granted, than any other program in the federal government. Why? Because the EPA's brownfields program is one of the few, if not only, economic development tool that allows rural economic development officials to level the playing field in the competition with urban economic development officials, with the trophy being a cleaner, healthier environment that offers new employment opportunities to frontline communities.

- a. How does EPA's funding dovetail with the funding from the Economic Development Administration?

RESPONSE: EPA funding is great for reuse planning, community consensus building and public involvement, environmental assessments, and environmental remediation. EDA funding is great for developing the economic and market analysis to target market the industries and business to recruit onto the brownfield/RCRA site that was identified in the reuse plan, providing infrastructure to the site, constructing a building on the site, and training the workforce for the industry that will locate in the building on the site.

- b. How do these resources help economic development officials like you to attract more investment?

RESPONSE: There are so many financial gaps to fill in the industry/business recruitment and retention process. Each transaction requires a capital stack of money to close the deal. This stack includes soft costs (surveys, attorney costs, studies, plans, architecture and civil designs, construction drawings, and construction administration) and hard costs (site acquisition, site preparation, utilities and infrastructure, and building construction). These funding sources help agencies, like ours, attract business and industry, finance the construction or expansion of our industries, and grow our workforce. In order to stay competitive nationally and internationally, we need to have a robust tool box of incentives to grow our existing industries and recruit new industries to employ our labor force.

6. When you do your work, how to you work to focus on the communities most in need?

RESPONSE: We meet regularly with our partners in education, workforce training, employers, elected officials, faith-based communities, justice-involved communities,

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civic organizations, military organizations, community-action agencies, and neighborhood groups to identify the employment opportunities in our community and available workforce to meet these opportunities. Once identified, we focus on increasing our labor participation rate, recruiting a workforce outside our region, and training our workforce to meet the demands of our industries.

- a. Do you work to identify zoning and other issues that can be an impediment to healthy economic development?

RESPONSE: Yes, and we collaborate with our partners to remove the impediments.