

H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

9TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEES:

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
REPUBLICAN LEADER

ENERGY

HEALTH

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April 7, 2022

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Chairwoman
Interior and Environment
Appropriations Subcommittee
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Interior and Environment
Appropriations Subcommittee
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Pingree and Ranking Member Joyce:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to highlight a matter of great importance to my district as you move forward in the appropriations process.

A top priority of mine is to address the need for adequate funding for coal communities in Virginia, and throughout much of Appalachia, to reclaim abandoned mine lands in a way that supports economic development and transitions our economy that has been built on coal. The Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program has proven to be a valuable tool in this effort and I'm here to today to share an update with you on the progress we have made in my part of Appalachia with these funds.

Since I first advocated for the expansion of the then-called AML Pilot Program back in 2015 and Virginia received its first round of funding in 2017, this program has spurred economic development in the heart of coal country where it is greatly needed.

We have already seen some amazing projects come forward as a result of this program. Some examples of economic development in Virginia on former mining lands include: a solar farm; hemp farming to remove heavy metals, oils, and other toxins from the soil; other sustainable community farming; the creation of new industrial parks; removing a highwall; ecotourism projects; and cultural centers such as a year-round music venue.

One of the pillars of a strong economy is adaptability. In my part of Virginia, we are taking land that is no longer usable for its former purpose of coal production and transitioning it to future

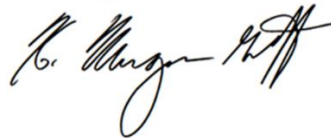
uses. The reclamation work itself creates jobs, and the uses the land is put to, whether industrial or tourism, supports jobs and economic growth as well.

This funding is needed to really get in and continue to help these Appalachian coal communities that have been economically devastated, while at the same time helping reduce the environmental impact of un-reclaimed mine lands.

I hope that you will join me in advocating for coal communities in Appalachia and maintain robust funding for the AMLER Program in the FY23 appropriations bill this subcommittee will write.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Morgan Griffith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "H" and a long, sweeping underline.

H. MORGAN GRIFFITH
Member of Congress