

**Chairman Hal Rogers**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Hearing: L-HHS-Ed Public Witnesses**  
**Introducing Charles Baird**  
**March 25, 2014**  
**Opening Statement As Prepared**

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Thank you Mr.Chairman.

It is my great honor to introduce one of my constituents to this subcommittee today. Mr. Charles Baird serves as the Chairman of Coal Operators and Associates (COA). COA represents mine operators throughout central Appalachia, and thus has been at the forefront of the challenges experienced by coal producers in the region, which he will talk about today.

This administration's relentless attack on the coal industry has brought the economy of eastern Kentucky to a grinding halt. In the last two years alone nearly 8,000 miners have been laid off. It is easy to see why. Over the last five years, this administration has worked to uphold its campaign promise to bankrupt anyone who intends to build new coal fired power plants. Thanks to this Administration - mining permits have languished; new rules have made it almost impossible to mine coal, court decisions are summarily disregarded; and productive mines sit idle. The result is that hard-working, able bodied Americans who want to work to feed their families and provide better lives for their children, have been forced into the unemployment line.

I am proud of this hard working spirit that resides in my district, and that Mr. Baird represents. It is time to stop picking energy winners and losers and realize that coal is our best strategic energy resource and keeps food on the table and utility bills low. It keeps our people out of the unemployment line. And most importantly for our country, it keeps high-tech and manufacturing companies humming and the small businesses and communities across our country vibrant. In short, coal keeps the lights on and we need to keep them on.

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

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