

H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

9TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEES:

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
REPUBLICAN LEADER

ENERGY

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May 13, 2021

The Honorable David E. Price
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Transportation, and
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Transportation, and
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

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

The Coalfields Expressway, or U.S. Route 121, is designated a Congressional High Priority Corridor. The Expressway is a proposed four-lane highway that would provide a much needed and more efficient pathway through the coalfields region of Southwest Virginia and Southern West Virginia. By providing safe and rapid access to communities along the corridor, it will greatly improve interstate commerce between disadvantaged portions of Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky.

As an area that has been ravaged by economic depression with the exit of much of the coal industry, Southwest Virginia stands to benefit greatly from increased connectivity with our surrounding states, as would Kentucky and West Virginia. This highway could serve as an economic lifeline, bringing in commerce and tourism to the area.

The current roadways that serve the communities and would benefit from the Coalfields Expressway are primarily rural roads, which are not as safe, well maintained, or easy to navigate. For example, Dickenson County, which this highway would run through, is the only county in my district without a four-lane road.

Not only do these challenges make passage for local residents difficult, but it also means that businesses and through-traffic avoid this region. Our economic development boards struggle to get businesses to even consider the area because of the lack of connectivity to other regions and major highways.

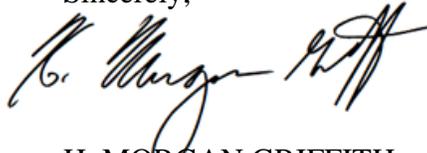
This Expressway would bring much needed commerce to the area and provide residents and Americans from across the country a new and better way to explore Appalachia.

Funding challenges have made the completion of this project difficult. In Virginia, even when the state has received Federal funding for highway projects, those precious Federal dollars have been sent to more populated regions like Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Norfolk.

I would appreciate the support of the Members of this Committee as we work to provide a much-needed lifeline to the people of Southwest Virginia's coalfields.

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 large initial "H" and a long, sweeping underline.

H. MORGAN GRIFFITH
Member of Congress