



City of Hazard
P.O. Box 420
Hazard, Kentucky 41701

Donald “Happy” Mobelini, Mayor

(606) 436-3171

Chairman Paul Tomko
2369 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

April 11, 2021

Dear Chairman Tomko,

On behalf of Hazard, Perry County and Eastern Kentucky, we are asking for support as the federal government accelerates the transition away from fossil fuels.

Hazard, Perry County and Eastern Kentucky are still dealing with the on-going decline of the coal industry and the aftermath of layoffs including the loss of 13,000 coal jobs. The accelerated transition away from coal and natural gas will only continue to hurt our communities with more lost of jobs and tax revenue.

Hazard and Perry County are striving to employ out-of-work miners through a mix of local, state, federal and private programs, as we are dealing with the epidemic, poverty, opioid abuses, aging infrastructure, environmental issues and a deficient funding for education. We in Eastern Kentucky need a voice to advocate while in the midst of economic transition.

More economic uncertainty will continue to destabilize our local economies and governments when services and support are needed most. Without an effective transition and reliable opportunities to find new ways to sustain our communities, Eastern Kentucky will continue to face economic devastation.

With the decline of the coal industry, Perry County continues to lose population. We need legislation in place to help attract, retain and advance our young people in the region so they can have careers and raise their families in the beautiful hills of the Appalachian Mountains. We need solutions to be introduced as we address the challenges faced.

Hope still exists in Appalachia as we struggle to diversify our economy and hold on to what coal and natural gas jobs are left. Help us to use the limited resources we have and develop a plan as we transition from dependency of coal and natural gas.

Solutions should be developed to help the transition and serve as opportunity for economic diversification and help our coal miners transition to good paying jobs so they can continue to live and have a good quality of life in Eastern Kentucky.

The federal government must recognize the very real and pressing needs of economically distressed communities such as in Eastern Kentucky. We have experienced so much of the burden of the energy transition and urge the government to address and take the necessary steps to support historically coal-dependent regions so that we can compete with the rest of the world and not be left behind.

Thank you for considering our plea. We invite you to come visit Eastern Kentucky and see the challenges we are facing so we can work together to find solutions such as high speed internet access and the infrastructure to attract new industry.

Sincerely,

Donald "Happy" Mobelini

Donald "Happy" Mobelini, Mayor of Hazard