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March 25, 2019

The Hon. Raul M. Grijalva, Chairman
The Hon. Rob Bishop, Ranking Member
The Hon. Alan Lowenthal, Subcommittee on Energy and Natural Resources, Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Reauthorization of the Collection Fees Supporting the Abandoned Mine Land Fund

Dear Representatives,

I am writing to highlight the need for reauthorization of the collection fees associated with the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) of 1977. Over a century of environmentally unregulated mining practices took a huge toll on the land and water where mining occurred. However, SMCRA changed the face of the coal mining industry into one that is vastly safer with a significantly smaller environmental impact and allowed for reclamation of pre-regulation hazards and scars.

The Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Reclamation Program, which is funded by these fees, has been an important tool in remediating coal refuse piles that once did and in many areas still continue to pollute the historic coal regions of Pennsylvania. Funding for reclamation activities is derived from a fee on every ton of coal mined in the U.S. since 1977. Those fees are placed into an account known as the Abandoned Mine Reclamation (AMR) Fund. The collection of these fees is set to expire in September of 2021. However, our work is not done.

The Appalachian Region Independent Power Producers Association (ARIPPA) is the trade association representing the environmentally beneficial coal refuse to energy industry. In a 2016 study, we found that the industry in Pennsylvania supports nearly 2,800 jobs with an estimated annual economic impact of \$589 million and produced \$26 million of annual environmental benefit to the commonwealth.

The coal industry helped to power our nation through an industrial revolution and two World Wars, and nowhere are the reminders of the impact of this industry more prevalent than the Appalachian coal regions of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Pennsylvania is home to at least 820 identified piles of coal refuse (i.e. waste coal, culm, boney), which are estimated to contain

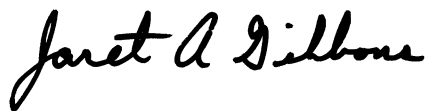
nearly 300 million tons of waste coal covering nearly 9,500 acres. These remnants of the historically vibrant Pennsylvania coal industry now pollute our land and water.

However, this region has a means by which to remediate this environmental concern while providing energy to power our communities. In Pennsylvania alone, coal refuse electric generating units (EGUs) utilizing circulating bed boiler (CFB) technology have reclaimed over 230 million tons of waste coal since the early 1990's, which has remediated over 7,000 acres of land and restored more than 1,200 miles of polluted streams. AML sites remediated by ARIPPA facilities are now parks, baseball fields, green spaces and commercial development sites. Previously uninhabitable waterways are seeing renewed life with some now serving as active Pennsylvania trout streams.

While ARIPPA member plants are not directly eligible for AMR funds, we provide a vital resource in AML reclamation by partnering with environmental groups, such as the Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR) and Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (WPCAMR), to dispose of coal refuse cleaned up at reclamation sites and provide beneficial use ash to use as part of the remediation process. We also collaborate with Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) officials within the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to identify and reclaim sites. These partnerships with EPCAMR, WPCAMR, and PA DEP allow the state to use these AMR Fund dollars in a way that provides the maximum amount of land and water reclamation.

ARIPPA supports the continuation of the benefits that come from federal funding of the AMR Fund. We appreciate your efforts to keep this important environmental program viable and allow the coal refuse to energy industry to maintain our public and private partnerships to reclaim AML sites and remediate the black mountains and orange water that scar the land across Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Respectfully submitted,



Jaret Gibbons
Executive Director
ARIPPA

cc: Gary Merritt, ARIPPA President