

Director of Environmental Affairs, Olympus Power, Representing ARIPPA

Thank you Chairman Shimkus and thank you to the committee for allowing me to testify at today's hearing. My name is Vince Brisini and I'm the Director of Environmental Affairs for Olympus Power. I'm here today testifying on behalf of ARIPPA in support of the SENSE Act.

ARIPPA is the trade association for a small but unique industry that removes coal refuse from the environment and then combusts that coal refuse, along with limestone, in circulating fluidized bed boilers to make electricity.

The coal refuse being used by the ARIPPA member facilities and other similar facilities is typically material remaining after the historic mining and processing of coal.

The resulting ash from this coal refuse to energy process is used to remediate and reclaim coal refuse sites and other mining affected lands.

Coal refuse piles cause air, surface water and ground water pollution as well as being safety and health hazards.

As a lifelong resident of the bituminous coal region of Pennsylvania, I've lived among coal refuse piles and experienced first-hand the air pollution and odor issues caused by the piles that are burning; the dust that blows off of them; and the water pollution that causes many miles of streams to be so contaminated that they can't support aquatic life.

I have also witnessed the benefits provided by the coal refuse to energy facilities.

The coal refuse piles that were removed from Revloc, Pennsylvania by Ebensburg Power Company and the land that was reclaimed as part of the coal refuse to energy process, not only eliminated sources of air and water pollution, it brought life back to the South Branch of the Blacklick Creek.

This project has allowed the South Branch Fishing Club to stock the stream for the past three years with between 500 to 1,000 trout each year.

In addition to these kinds of environmental and recreational benefits, the coal refuse to energy facilities provide considerable economic benefits to the areas in which they are located.

According to reports prepared by Econsult Solutions, a Philadelphia-based economic consulting firm, the combined economic and environmental benefits of the coal refuse to energy industry to Pennsylvania and West Virginia total about \$800 million per year. The industry directly and indirectly support approximately 3,800 jobs with total earnings for those employees of more than \$231.5 million per year.

While these coal refuse to energy facilities are relatively small, the family sustaining jobs they provide directly and indirectly are critical to the small communities where the facilities are located.

One of the biggest problems, if not the biggest problem, that the SENSE Act faces is that most people have not personally experienced coal refuse piles.

People who have never lived in a coal region and haven't experienced daily the environmental, health and safety issues associated with coal refuse simply do not appreciate those issues and the amazing benefits provided by these coal refuse to energy facilities.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection recently issued a report showing diminished pollutant loadings, generally well over 90% removal for

most pollutants, from the sites that have been remediated and reclaimed through the coal refuse to energy process.

These reduced loadings are exactly why the South Branch Fishing Club has been able to successfully stock trout in the South Branch of the Blacklick Creek.

Absent the efforts of the coal refuse to energy industry, it's likely that most of the remaining coal refuse piles will never be reclaimed or remediated. There simply isn't enough public funding available.

What is important to understand about the SENSE Act is that it addresses the one standard in the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards rule that most of the bituminous coal refuse-fired facilities can't meet, the acid gas standard.

The SENSE Act instead provides an additional performance limit for bituminous coal refuse-fired units only, which would require 93% removal of the potential sulfur dioxide in the coal refuse being used as fuel.

Importantly, under the SENSE Act, this is accomplished in a fashion that does not have any negative effect on the environment.

Because the Cross State Air Pollution Rule sulfur dioxide emissions budgets and the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards rule sulfur dioxide acid gas limit are both based on the same sulfur dioxide emission rate, the state and regional sulfur dioxide emissions will at most remain the same, but more likely will be even lower under the SENSE Act.

Consequently, all of the monetized benefits of both the Cross State Air Pollution Rule and the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards rule will be preserved, if not increased, by the provisions contained in the SENSE Act.

So to me, someone that has lived all of his life in the bituminous coal region, the SENSE Act makes perfect sense.

It protects the environment and allows the bituminous coal refuse fired facilities to continue to provide their economic, multi-media environmental, safety and health benefits.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the SENSE Act and thank you to Representative Rothfus for crafting a bill that is to everyone's benefit.