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Comments from Jaret Gibbons, Executive Director of the Appalachian Region Independent Power Producers Association (ARIPPA), on the introduction of H.R.4735, the Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act, by Congressman Dan Meuser (R-PA-9) and Congressman Matthew Cartwright (D-PA-8):

"ARIPPA would like to thank Congressmen Meuser and Cartwright for their bipartisan leadership in promoting environmental remediation and energy production by recognizing the positive environmental externalities created by this unique industry. This bill furthers the longtime public-private partnership with these environmentally beneficial coal refuse plants to remediate the coal refuse sites that scar our land and pollute the air and water from over a century of historic mining operations that powered our nation's growth as a military and industrial superpower. The legacy of this essential national resource has been left to our current citizens and the coal refuse reclamation to energy industry is proud to share in the collective responsibility of the state and federal government to support these environmental cleanup efforts in mining-affected communities across our nation."

"Coal refuse plants provide multimedia environmental benefits from the removal of coal refuse piles and the reclamation of mining-affected lands with annual environmental and public benefits in Pennsylvania of \$37 million, including water quality, public health and safety, and land value. This is in addition to the \$615 million in direct economic impact and 3,000 full time jobs supported by the industry, which are located largely in struggling former coal mining communities. According to a report issued by Econsult Solutions in June of this year, replicating their annual removal and remediation would cost the state and federal government up to \$267 million annually, while addressing all identified coal refuse piles in Pennsylvania alone would cost as much as \$7.4 billion."

"Just in Pennsylvania, the coal refuse reclamation to energy industry has already removed more than 225 million tons of coal refuse, remediated over 7,200 acres of land and restored at least 1,200 miles of polluted streams. Unfortunately, the current economics of the industry are unsustainable due to current market and regulatory challenges, and without some intervention will lead to further plant closures and a permanent loss of their public benefits, including the unique environmental remediation of coal refuse piles with beneficial use ash that only they can perform. These challenges have already led to the permanent closure of at least 3 coal refuse plants, with others operating only seasonally or considering closure in the absence of additional public support.

"This isn't a subsidy for power plants, but rather an investment in a public-private partnership along with companies who are already investing hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up an environmental hazard that pollutes the land, leaches acid mine drainage (AMD) into the water and catches on fire releasing uncontrolled ground level emissions polluting areas downstream and downwind of abandoned mine sites. Without the coal refuse reclamation to energy industry, the responsibility to clean up these sites and the billions of dollars in costs to do so will fall solely on the taxpayers. H.R. 4735 will save these plants, thousands of jobs, millions in economic benefits, and most importantly the environmental remediation they perform in mining-affected communities across the nation at a fraction of that cost.

"In 2016, the Pennsylvania legislature and Governor Tom Wolf recognized the importance of the coal refuse energy to reclamation industry by implementing a state Coal Refuse Energy and Reclamation Tax Credit. Earlier this year, they doubled the amount of that tax credit to \$20 million per year, but due to the continuing decline in energy market payments and increasing costs of production, this will only serve as a bridge to a more permanent federal solution. Included in this year's state tax credit bill was language encouraging the passage of a federal coal refuse energy and reclamation tax credit program. ARIPPA appreciates the continued support of Governor Wolf and Pennsylvania state legislators who have advocated to put this program encouraging remediation of polluting coal refuse sites where it most appropriately belongs - the federal level - and we look forward to similarly strong, bipartisan support in Washington."

The full Econsult Solutions [report](#) and executive [summary](#) can be found online at www.arippa.org.

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