



Dedicated to Mine Land Reclamation, Conservation, & Economic Development in the Wyoming Valley

November 18, 2019

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
United States House of Representatives
1034 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for H.R. 4735 | Mine Affected Community Energy & Environment Act

Dear Mr. Cartwright:

On behalf of Earth Conservancy (EC), I wanted to commend you for your leadership by introducing H.R. 4735, the Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act. For communities impacted by abandoned mine lands, this legislation is vital in reclamation efforts. In many cases, only through partnership with coal refuse energy facilities can environmental recovery and site reuse advance.

As you know, EC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the impacts of historical anthracite coal mining in northeastern Pennsylvania. In 1994, EC purchased the lands of the bankrupt Blue Coal Corporation with the mission of reclaiming its mine-scarred properties to improve the region's environment, economy, and quality of life. Twenty-five years later, 2,000 acres have been recovered, the majority of which are now available for or already in beneficial reuse. The work, furthermore, has sustained or created thousands of jobs for the region.

Recovery of waste coal has been critical to EC's success. Reclamation of mine-scarred lands is expensive, on average costing \$25,000 per acre. As a nonprofit, EC relies on grant funding to support its work. If removal of waste coal were added into our fees, reclamation of the land would be cost-prohibitive. In addition, for legacy minelands like ours, the burden for reclamation would be on the State, and thus the taxpayers. That is why, as reported in *Bloomberg News*, the majority of municipalities, government agencies, economic development organizations, and environmental groups involved – including EC – support the cogeneration industry. The common refrain: the “benefits of cleaning up the refuse piles outweigh the costs” (Lee, 2017).

At present, seven of EC's major projects have incorporated resource recovery in their scope of work, with over 20 million tons of coal refuse having been processed. This means that at a 40% recovery rate, 8 million tons were burned in the generation of electricity. Moreover, over 570 acres of legacy minelands have been readied for reclamation and reuse. EC would not have been able to reach this milestone without the involvement of waste coal facilities. We see the industry's work as in keeping with our own mission, helping to address the damages from historic mining in ways that benefit both the environment and the community. When reclamation is completed, sites are left in a better condition than before. Safety and aesthetics are improved. Environmental impairments such as erosion, sedimentation, and acidic discharges are reduced. Habitat is repaired. And all of this is done in a cost-effective manner.

In closing, companies that rely on the credits offered by H.R. 4735 have contributed greatly to EC's success in reclaiming thousands of acres of mine-scarred land. It is a strong public-private partnership, and their work makes environmental and economic sense.

Again, we support passage of H.R. 4735, the Mine Affected Community Energy & Environment Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Dziak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Michael A. Dziak
Present/CEO



Dedicated to Mine Land Reclamation, Conservation, & Economic Development in the Wyoming Valley

November 18, 2019

The Honorable Dan Meuser
United States House of Representatives
326 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for H.R. 4735 | Mine Affected Community Energy & Environment Act

Dear Mr. Meuser:

On behalf of Earth Conservancy (EC), I wanted to commend you for your leadership by introducing H.R. 4735, the Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act. For communities impacted by abandoned mine lands, this legislation is vital in reclamation efforts. In many cases, only through partnership with coal refuse energy facilities can environmental recovery and site reuse advance.

As you know, EC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the impacts of historical anthracite coal mining in northeastern Pennsylvania. In 1994, EC purchased the lands of the bankrupt Blue Coal Corporation with the mission of reclaiming its mine-scarred properties to improve the region's environment, economy, and quality of life. Twenty-five years later, 2,000 acres have been recovered, the majority of which are now available for or already in beneficial reuse. The work, furthermore, has sustained or created thousands of jobs for the region.

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Again, we support passage of H.R. 4735, the Mine Affected Community Energy & Environment Act.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Dziak
President/CEO