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November 18, 2019

Congressman Mike Doyle
2637 East Carson Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15203

RE: Support for H.R. 4735, the Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act

Dear Congressmen Doyle:

As you know, Pennsylvania has a rich industrial heritage founded on the abundant availability of coal, which helped fuel the industrial revolution and helped the United States prevail in two world wars. However, as a result of this history dating back to the 1800s, we have also been left with a legacy of abandoned mines and abandoned mine drainage which scar our landscape, present hazards to our citizens, and degrade our environment. Therefore, I support the Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act, H.R. 4735, and urge the United States Congress to pass this legislation encouraging the continued efforts of coal refuse reclamation to energy facilities to address the legacy of coal mining by restoring our land, air and streams while providing an alternative source of electricity and thousands of family-sustaining jobs.

Abandoned un-reclaimed mining areas cover nearly 300 square miles of our state, at over 5,000 sites. The total coal refuse at these sites may be as much as 8 billion cubic yards. Pennsylvania has more abandoned mine land and more miles of streams impaired by abandoned mine drainage than any other state in the nation. The legacy of this nation's mining industry has been left to our current citizens, who must cope with the myriad of issues posed by abandoned mine lands (AML) and millions of tons of coal refuse strewn across the landscape of our communities. Coal refuse piles pollute the land, water and air with uncontrolled emissions from burning refuse piles and contamination of land and water resources with acid runoff and sedimentation.

In order to help address this pressing environmental challenge, in 2016 we passed House Bill 1198 (Act 84 of 2016) which created a \$10 million Coal Refuse Energy and Reclamation Tax Credit program in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The purpose of this program is to incentivize the continued reclamation of coal refuse from mining-affected lands which pollute the air and waterways of Pennsylvania and downstream states. Earlier this year, House Bill 262 (Act 13 of 2019) doubled the size of the program to \$20 million.

While the program has successfully provided additional resources for the environmental remediation of polluting waste coal, due to budgetary restrictions, even with the recent increase, the state program will prove insufficient to incentivize the coal refuse reclamation to energy industry to operate at its full environmental remediation potential. Pennsylvania's program will at best serve as a short-term bridge to a permanent federal solution of this environmental issue. Thus, included in Act 13 of 2019 was a provision that would suspend Pennsylvania's state tax credit program if a similar coal refuse tax credit were created at the federal level.

Therefore, I am requesting your support and co-sponsorship of the Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act, H.R. 4735, introduced by Pennsylvania Congressmen Dan Meuser and Matt Cartwright to create a federal coal refuse tax credit program. This legislation is critical to address the health, safety and environmental costs imposed on local communities by our nation's coal mining legacy and continues a longstanding public-private partnership with coal refuse reclamation to energy facilities that remove polluting coal refuse piles and reclaim AML sites. Not only will their legislation relieve the Pennsylvania state budget of a \$20 million per year environmental remediation cost but could provide the state an additional \$5 million per year in funding for riparian buffer restoration in affected communities.

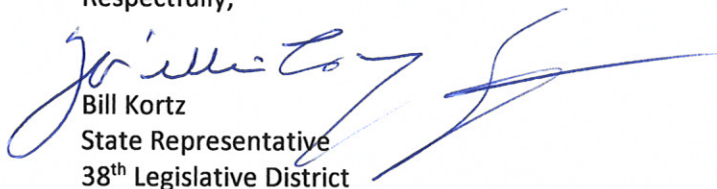
I commend the Congressmen's effort to put this program where it most appropriately belongs – at the federal level. These coal refuse piles are the remnants of more than a century of coal mining in Pennsylvania that powered the growth of our nation as a military and industrial superpower. Now the residents of Pennsylvania are burdened with the pollution and remediation costs of an industry from which our entire country benefited. In my view, the United States should step up and share these costs.

The coal refuse reclamation to energy industry delivers substantial economic and environmental benefits as a vital partner in the effort to address the problems associated with AML sites. In Pennsylvania alone, over the past 30 years this industry has removed more than 225 million tons of coal refuse, reclaimed at least 7,200 acres of mine-scarred land and restored over 1,200 miles of impaired streams, but there is still more work to be done.

The industry also represents a major source of economic activity and family-sustaining employment. The facilities in Pennsylvania alone produce \$615 million in annual economic benefit, supporting 3,000 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs annually. These benefits are concentrated in historic coal communities that face existing challenges in generating economic opportunities for residents.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to protect the Pennsylvania taxpayers and environment by supporting H.R. 4735, the Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act.

Respectfully,



Bill Kortz
State Representative
38th Legislative District