

swoyersville Incorporated December 12, 1899 **Borough**

November 19, 2019

Congressman Dan Meuser
326 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Matt Cartwright
1034 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Congressmen Meuser and Cartwright:

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.

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.

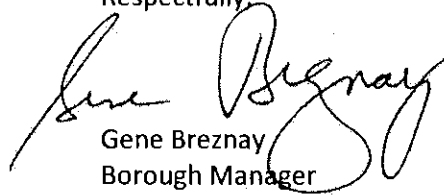
Here in Swoyersville, Luzerne County, PA, a sprawling area of coal waste is currently being removed for reuse. What was once an area of wasteland, an eyesore, safety issue and health hazard, is now being removed to be used as energy once again. The project which was long wished for has become a reality. When the project is complete there will be new housing units built on the site. What a remarkable turnaround, land once thought useless and to be with us forever in that state, will be put to good use for the town giving the local economy a boost with an increased tax base.

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.

We commend your leadership on this issue by introducing H.R. 4735, the Mine Affected Community Energy and Environment Act. 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.

We 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.

Respectfully,



Gene Breznay
Borough Manager

CC: Swoyersville Borough Council
Mayor Concert