



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

**FY 2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill – Subcommittee
May 25, 2016
Opening Statement As Prepared**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. Today, we have before us the Fiscal Year 2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. I would like to thank Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum, as well as the Subcommittee Members, for their hard work on this important piece of legislation.

This bill, funded at the discretionary level of \$32.1 billion, has a significant impact upon the management and preservation of our natural resources, as well as our ability to grow the economy and create jobs. This subcommittee has included important provisions and made key investments that will ensure the health of our environment, while pushing back on burdensome regulations that threaten jobs without achieving additional environmental protections.

Notably, this bill takes important steps to address the drinking water quality issues around the country. The bill provides States with the necessary resources to ensure that their water systems are safe and properly managed. The bill also extends the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program for one year, meets our obligations to Native Americans and provides full funding for wildfire suppression. In addition, this legislation includes a \$71 million increase for the National Park Service, as we continue to celebrate the 100th year of the park system this year.

Along with the FY17 Budget Request, the President has again proposed his Power Plus Plan as a means of bringing jobs back to Appalachian towns that have been decimated by the downturn in the coal industry. In my view, this plan is a day late and over eleven thousand coal mining jobs short – but this committee thankfully shares a commitment to the communities that are struggling under the weight of the Administration’s onerous regulatory agenda. Last year, this subcommittee refined the specific Power Plus proposal regarding abandoned mine lands to pilot the concept of pairing mine reclamation with economic development. I am encouraged by the progress of this program thus far, and am pleased that the subcommittee will expand the pilot program this year to include three additional states.

While innovative economic development programs hold great promise for revitalizing these struggling communities, there is no question that regulations aimed at killing coal are largely to blame for the over 11,000 mining jobs lost in my District since 2008. Until we see relief from the onslaught of regulations coming out of this Administration, we will continue to see jobs eliminated in this sector. Accordingly, I am pleased to see that the subcommittee has included several provisions that will protect our constituents from bureaucratic overreach and reverse the devastating impact that these anti-coal policies are having on jobs and the economy. Specifically, the bill takes action to prevent the implementation of the Waters of the United States Rule, new greenhouse gas emissions standards for coal-fired power plants, and the pending Stream Protection Rule. These regulations will force us to move away from our nation’s cheapest and most dependable source of energy in favor of more expensive and less reliable options – meaning higher bills and less certainty for hardworking families everywhere.

Again, I appreciate the hard work of this subcommittee in crafting this bill. It is a good bill and I encourage each Member to support it. Thank you, and I yield back.

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