

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 7, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
U.S. Senate
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senate
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Feinstein:

As you begin the process of drafting the Fiscal Year 2018 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) receive \$152 million, the amount included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-31).

Created in 1965, the Appalachian Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership that invests in projects that promote economic development in 420 counties across the 13 Appalachian states, which encompasses more than 25 million Americans. Since its inception, ARC has invested \$3.8 billion in 25,000 projects in Appalachia. These investments are responsible for the creation of more than 300,000 jobs and \$10 billion in added earnings for the Region. On average, ARC funds sustain an estimated 6,364 jobs and produce \$204 million in earnings annually. In just the past two years, the Commission supported 662 projects in the Region totaling over \$170 million. These investments are projected to educate and train over 49,000 students and workers and create or retain nearly 24,000 jobs in the Region.

Maintaining funding at the FY 2017 enacted level will allow the Commission to continue to advance the goals of its strategic plan, including increasing employment and economic opportunities for those living in Appalachia; strengthening and maintaining the Region's infrastructure; and providing additional educational and workforce opportunities for citizens of Appalachia so that they can compete in a 21st Century global economy.

As a part of this request, we ask that the Committee continue its commitment to the ARC POWER Initiative by providing funding for the program at the FY 2017 enacted level of \$50 million. The POWER Initiative is a multi-agency initiative that provides grants to communities that have been affected by severe job losses in the coal industry and the changing dynamics of America's energy production. These grants facilitate the growth of new industries in Appalachia and support job training and educational programs that help grow and diversify the Region's economy. ARC has provided over \$75 million through the POWER Initiative that has helped create and retain over 6,800 jobs in 236 coal-impacted communities in Appalachia.

We are disappointed that the President's FY 2018 Budget request calls for eliminating the Appalachian Regional Commission. Since its formation, the Commission has played a significant role in improving the lives of those living in Appalachia; however there is still much work to be done. Many Appalachian communities still experience severe economic distress, have unemployment rates much higher than the national average, lack access to affordable high-speed Internet service, and are susceptible to poorer health outcomes than those located outside Appalachia. Eliminating funding for ARC would undermine the progress made in Appalachia over the last few decades and would have a detrimental impact on the 25 million Americans who reside in the Region today.

On behalf of our constituents who live in the Appalachian Region today, we urge you to support continued funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission in FY 2018 at the FY 2017 enacted level of \$152 million.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

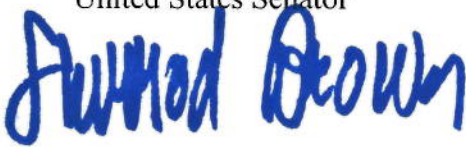
Sincerely,



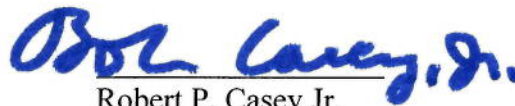
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Sherrod C. Brown
United States Senator



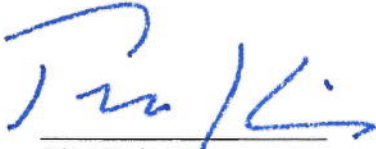
Robert P. Casey Jr.
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator