

September 23, 2008

Allegheny County

Cynthia Carrow

Bedford County

Bernie Hoffnar, Ph.D.

Bucks County

Richard J. Manfredi

Crawford County

Burt A. Waite

Cumberland County

Walter N. Heine

Delaware County

Gail M. Conner, Esquire

Erie County

Pat Lupo, O.S.B.

Jefferson County

David L. Strong

Lackawanna County

Joyce A. Hatala

Lancaster County

Jolene E. Chinchilli

Lehigh County

Janet B. Keim

Montgomery County

Curtis N. Kratz

Schuylkill County

Bruce M. Tetkoskie

Tioga County

Thaddeus K. Stevens

«Name»

«House_or_Senate»

«DC»

Dear «Salutation»:

A great potential benefit for Pennsylvania resulted from Congressional reauthorization of the Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) in December 2006. The new law provides a significant increase in funding available to the Commonwealth (and other eastern mining States) for reclamation of abandoned mine lands thereby reducing water pollution, restoring land and eliminating public safety hazards. Now a federal budget proposal threatens this action by Congress.

The President's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget would eliminate \$21 million in funding for the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Emergency Program and would transfer responsibility for emergency situations to the states.

The Office of Surface Mining (OSM) currently administers the AML Emergency Program in Pennsylvania and Kentucky. Since 2002, the OSM has responded to approximately 775 emergency situations in Pennsylvania alone and has spent nearly \$24 million on emergencies.

The loss of federal emergency funds would require Pennsylvania to shift monies from other mine land reclamation projects. This additional burden will hamper our ability to reclaim our huge inventory of high priority abandoned mine lands and address related mine drainage issues. In Pennsylvania, elimination of this program could result in a funding shortfall for AML projects of approximately \$3 million annually. In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection estimates that the cost for Pennsylvania to administer the AML Emergency Program could be an additional \$2.5 million annually, further reducing project funds.

«Name»


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As a result, we respectfully request that you take appropriate action that would safeguard continued funding of the Office of Surface Mining AML Emergency Program.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please call Sue Wilson, Council's Executive Director at 717-787-4527 if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard J. Manfredi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Richard J. Manfredi
Chairman
Citizens Advisory Council

cc: Governor Rendell
Pa. Congressional Delegation