



THE RECLAIM ACT

As America transitions to a clean energy economy, coal communities and working families need help to create new economic opportunities. In early 2016, the bipartisan RECLAIM Act was introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives by coal state representatives to begin that process. It provides \$1 billion over the course of five years to support economic and community development projects aimed at revitalizing the places hardest hit by coal's downturn.

DETAILS ABOUT THE LEGISLATION

The legislation releases \$1 billion from the Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Fund to assist communities that have traditionally relied on the coal industry for employment or have recently experienced significant coal job losses. Under the plan, \$200 million will be distributed to participating states annually for five years, empowering those states to work with local communities to identify and fund economic development projects at AML sites.

The majority of the funding -- which will not interfere with mineworkers' pension funding -- will be directly distributed by the Secretary of the Interior to states with unmet reclamation needs and \$5 million will be provided through grants each year for coal-producing states that no longer have abandoned mine lands. After two years, each state will have the opportunity to apply for bonus payments for any remaining AML funds that have not been used.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECLAIM ACT

Representative Hal Rogers (R-KY) is the lead sponsor of the RECLAIM Act, and Matt Cartwright (D-Pa.), Evan

Jenkins (R-WV.), Don Beyer (D-Va.), and Morgan Griffith (R-Va.) joined as co-sponsors. The year prior to RECLAIM's introduction, the Obama Administration proposed the Power+ Plan, which aims to invest more than \$5 billion into coal communities. A core element of Power+ would, like RECLAIM, use \$1 billion in AML funds over 5 years to invest in economic diversification and development programs, and clean-up projects at hazardous abandoned mines to boost employment and business opportunities. Power+ also puts tens of millions of dollars toward job training and employment services, and invests heavily in the health and retirement security of mineworkers and their families impacted by coal's decline.

Dozens of cities, towns, and municipalities across Appalachia (a major coal region) have passed resolutions urging their federal representatives to support the administration's proposal. In February 2016, Congressman Rogers, whose district is in Appalachia, introduced the RECLAIM Act to much fanfare from coal communities across the country.

WHAT'S NEXT

Congressman Rogers is the Chairman of the powerful U.S. House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee. His position, combined with the bipartisan nature of the bill and support for it from the Obama Administration, puts RECLAIM in a good position to move forward through the House of Representatives and to be taken up by the U.S. Senate. If the bill makes it through both chambers of Congress, it will be signed by the President and enacted into law.

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