DETAILS ABOUT THE LEGISLATION

The RECLAIM Act is a powerful step toward revitalizing communities adversely affected by America’s shift away from coal. The bill commits $1 billion to community-oriented, economic development and diversification projects to help clean up dangerous abandoned coal mines - spurring job creation and local business investment in coal mining regions based on the needs of local people.

This bill is a major opportunity for areas that have historically depended on the coal industry for jobs, economic stability, and union benefits to rebuild themselves by creating new, diverse businesses on their own terms. RECLAIM is by no means a cure-all for regions adversely affected by America’s shift away from coal, but it is a strong answer to the call for more diversification in their economies and can be a guiding light for future policies to help them rebuild.

Members of both parties have worked to strengthen RECLAIM since it’s introduction in March 2017. The original version of the bill omitted key language that promoted economic diversification and provided for community engagement during the reclamation process. To address this omission, Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) sponsored an amendment to prioritize projects that foster new forms of economic development and give local residents a voice in shaping their economic future. It also provided states with the flexibility they need to clean up high priority areas. After close collaboration with both Majority and Minority members of the House Natural Resources Committee, the “Beyer Amendment” and the RECLAIM Act passed committee with broad bipartisan support.

WHO’S IT FOR?

For these communities, the funding supplied through RECLAIM isn’t just about cleaning up abandoned mining sites, it’s also about rebuilding communities to be stronger and more resilient in a changing economic landscape through comprehensive discussions and shared benefits. What’s needed in these communities is real economic diversity and opportunities that extend beyond coal mining with good family-sustaining wages, union memberships, and gainful benefits.

WHAT’S NEXT?

The RECLAIM Act is a real opportunity to create jobs, empower local communities, and build long-term opportunities for working families in communities where coal has historically been the backbone of the local economy. Now that the RECLAIM Act has been strengthened to reflect its original intent, it is imperative that Congress pass it as quickly as possible. We’re calling on members of Congress to show their support for RECLAIM by joining the growing list of co-sponsors of this legislation.
THE RECLAIM ACT

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