

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

April 5, 2019

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 2020 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) receive no less than \$165 million in Fiscal Year 2020, the amount included in the Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2019 (P.L. 115-244).

Established in 1965, ARC is a federal-state partnership that invests in projects designed to support economic development in 420 counties across the 13 Appalachian states, encompassing more than 25 million Americans. In Fiscal Year 2018, ARC partnered with states and local development districts within Appalachia to support 522 projects totaling over \$125 million in funding. These investments were matched by nearly \$190 million in state and local funding and are projected to attract approximately \$1.5 billion in private investments in the region. This funding will help create or retrain more than 26,600 jobs and train and educate an additional 34,000 students and workers going forward.

Maintaining funding at the Fiscal Year 2019 level will allow ARC to continue to advance the goals of its strategic plan, including increasing employment and economic opportunities for those living in Appalachia; strengthening and maintaining infrastructure in the region; and providing additional educational and workforce opportunities for the citizens of Appalachia that will allow them to compete in an increasingly global economy.

As a part of this request, we ask that you include \$73 million for the Area Development Base Program; \$50 million for the Coal Impacted Communities Initiative; \$32 million for the Special Regional Initiative for Distress; and \$10 million for a Special Regional Initiative for Substance Abuse Mitigation Pilot. Funding for these programs will help ARC continue its mission to close the gap between Appalachia and the rest of the nation.

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Since its creation, ARC has played a significant role in improving the lives of those living in Appalachia. Unfortunately, the region has continued to experience challenges that few other parts of the country face. Many communities within Appalachia still experience severe economic distress, lack access to affordable high-speed Internet service, and are susceptible to poorer health outcomes than communities located outside the region. Robust funding for ARC is needed to continue the progress made in Appalachia and ensure a prosperous future for the region.

On behalf of our constituents who call the Appalachian Region their home, we urge you to support strong funding for ARC in FY 2020 at no less than the \$165 million allocated to the program in FY 2019.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator