

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 5, 2026

Dear Chairs Collins and Cole, Vice Chair Murray, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Appalachian communities are home to rich assets — including our land, water, heritage and people — and many of our organizations and local governments are working to leverage these assets as we diversify and strengthen our local economies. Our work is bipartisan. Every day, Appalachian communities work across political differences to find common ground; rebuild our economies; update dangerous, outdated infrastructure; and create a stronger foundation for the future.

These investments should be protected from cuts and freezes, and the agencies implementing these programs must be properly funded and staffed. Congress must ensure that the legislative branch's Article I power of the purse is protected as part of any FY27 funding agreement.

The 62 organizations signed onto this letter ask that you support the following investments in the FY27 appropriations bills:

Flood Resilience

Appalachian communities are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather. Federal support for building flood resilience will save the federal government money by reducing disaster recovery needs. The following priorities would reduce overall federal spending while increasing protections for the lives and livelihoods of Appalachian communities:

- **\$2 billion for a FEMA pre-disaster mitigation program, \$313 million for FEMA's Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis program, and \$175 million for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program.** FEMA must continue to make substantial investments in pre-disaster mitigation and to help communities prepare for disasters. (*Homeland Security*)
- **Preserve robust funding for weather forecasting and atmospheric and climate research at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).** Cuts to these programs shift forecasting and research burdens to the local level, making it tougher to prepare and manage for impending disasters. (*CJS*)
- **A report on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Disaster Home Repair Program.** The program was originally allocated \$60 million for households impacted by disasters in CY2022. Less than \$26 million has been spent over three years. Now that households impacted by

disasters since CY2022 are eligible for the funds, USDA should provide clarity about how they can improve the program and spend funds more expediently in the future. *(Agriculture)*

- **\$33 million for the U.S. Geological Survey’s (USGS) Federal Priority Streamgage (FPS) network, and \$75 million for the USGS Cooperative Matching Funds.** USGS streamgages provide timely, accurate information on streamflows; the USGS should prioritize deploying streamgages in Appalachia. *(Interior)*

Workforce Development

Continued funding for key workforce and employment programs designed to reconnect disconnected and dislocated workers, including formerly incarcerated workers, are of particular importance to Appalachian communities. These programs invest in proven training models to equip workers with skills for quality jobs in industries such as construction, clean energy and manufacturing. Recommendations include:

- **Increased funding for critical workforce programs, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Adult Education, Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Apprenticeship.** Expanded workforce development investments, including dislocated worker supports, Reentry Employment Opportunities and Individual Training Accounts, will help build a robust pipeline of skilled workers that is accessible and inclusive. Earn-and-Learn opportunities like the federal Registered Apprenticeship program create work-based learning opportunities for in-need industries. *(Labor-HHS)*
- **\$1.312B for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), including 584.9 million in funding for AmeriCorps and \$108 million for AmeriCorps VISTA** to place more than 200,000 individuals in nonprofit, faith-based, and local organizations where they can develop job training and marketable skills and provide key services to American communities. Priority consideration for rural communities, including in the decision-making and scoring process, should be continued. *(Labor-HHS)*

Supports for Children, Workers and Families

Basic programs to support children and families are an essential foundation to a productive workforce and stable economy; this includes ensuring all members of our communities have access to nutrition, childcare, housing and basic services.

- **Strengthen and protect funding for nutrition programs** including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), programs that support access to nutritious school meals, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and nutrition programs that serve older adults. *(Agriculture)*
- **Increased funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Headstart and Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five.** Current levels continue to reach just a fraction of eligible families, which jeopardizes workers’ economic security, and puts childhood development at risk. *(Labor-HHS)*
- **Increased funding for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and \$1 billion for the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP).** The \$4.05B provided for LIHEAP in FY26 is an important baseline, but utility rate increases warrant increased support to ensure access to basic utilities. *(Labor-HHS)*
- **Increased funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD),** including robust funding for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs. These

programs boost local economies by leveraging public and private resources to lift resident earnings and local tax revenue. *(THUD)*

Reshoring Manufacturing and Supporting Cleantech Supply Chain Development

- **Defend and fund clean energy and manufacturing innovation:** The Department of Energy (DOE) hosts a portfolio of at-risk programs that help American manufacturers deploy low- and net-zero carbon manufacturing. Guardrails are needed to ensure that DOE can carry out future spending according to congressional intent. Innovative programs that support sustainable manufacturing and clean energy projects in [energy communities](#), such as those that encourage the re-use of shuttered facilities or former mine lands, are needed to help Appalachia create a supply chain for clean energy and sustainable products that will boost reliability, create local jobs and keep costs down for consumers and businesses. *(Energy and Water)*
- **Technical assistance for small- and medium-sized manufacturers:** Congress should allocate funds specifically for technical assistance programs, including **\$175 million for the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)** with no reduction in the number of active MEP Centers; these facilities help small- and medium-sized U.S. manufacturers boost innovation, strengthen supply chains, and train workers. *(CJS)*

Protections for Coal Communities

Congress must shore up key protections for coal miners and mine safety as well as ensure that communities are not left with the burden of dangerous and polluting unreclaimed coal mines. Coal communities need this funding to clean up our land and water and chart a new, locally-driven economic vision for the future.

- **Fully fund OSMRE at \$132 million for Regulation and Technology, including \$79 million for regulatory grants to states and Tribes, and support OSMRE's mission with adequate staffing.** Reductions in the agency's budget and staffing put coal communities in danger of increased flooding, landslides, polluted waterways and other mine-related disasters. In addition, Congress must protect the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act's (IIJA) investment into the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund from further cuts. *(Interior)*
- **\$5 million for the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement's (OSMRE) Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative.** Mine reforestation mitigates flooding, benefits the broader environment, and creates jobs in the process. *(Interior)*
- **Fully fund programs that work to prevent black lung and support miners with this disease.** Funding for MSHA at \$406.5 million, the HRSA's Black Lung Clinics Program at \$12.8 million, and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at \$376.7 million are needed to continue critical programs which address safety and health issues for mine workers; this is particularly important given the [silica dust rule's](#) future implementation, which will protect coal miners from black lung disease. *(Labor-HHS)*

Economic Development

Historically underinvested communities often face the most challenges to obtaining the resources needed to rebuild. The programs below are essential to allow Appalachian communities to adapt to new challenges and opportunities.

- **\$645 million for the Economic Development Administration** to award grants that help communities bolster innovation, competitiveness, and economic development, including continued funding for rural and disadvantaged communities. *(CJS)*

- **\$324 million for the Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund**, as well as a continuation of the CDFI Bond Guarantee Program with \$500 million in guarantee authority and continued supports for rural economic growth. CDFIs invest, lend, and deliver responsible, affordable financial services to under-invested communities across the country. *(Financial Services)*
- **Robust overall funding levels for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development (USDA-RD) programs, including increased funding for Rural Housing Services** to enable the agency to expand this capacity building technical assistance program to more states to ensure that investments land where they are needed most. USDA-RD programs empower rural communities to invest in clean water, broadband, housing, economic development and more. *(Agriculture)*
- **\$200 million for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)** to continue its [clear track record](#) of providing leverage to create jobs, inspire entrepreneurship, support workforce development and rebuild local economies. *(Energy and Water)*

These recommendations span a broad range of issues, but the problems that Appalachia faces are complex and interconnected. We invite you to join and support the Appalachian communities that have rolled up their sleeves and are working hard to build a brighter future for our region, and for our nation.

Sincerely,

Appalachian Citizens' Law Center
 Appalachian Voices
 ReImagine Appalachia
 Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance (ABRA)
 The Alliance for Appalachia
 Action Together NEPA
 Appalachian Trail Conservancy
 Appalshop. Inc.
 Berwick Arts Association
 Center For Coalfield Justice
 Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)
 Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund
 Christians for the Mountains
 Citizens Coal Council
 Climate Justice Alliance
 Conservation Voters of PA
 Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR)
 Friends of the Tug Fork River
 Green Sanctuary of First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta OH
 Grow Pittsburgh
 Hip Hop Caucus
 Kentucky Resources Council
 Kentucky Riverkeeper

Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition
Kentucky Waterways Alliance
Keystone Development Center
Keystone Research Center
Kids for Saving Earth
Landforce
Latino Farmers & Ranchers International, Inc.
Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network (LiKEN)
Mechanism
Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action
Mobilify Southwestern Pennsylvania
Mom's Clean Air Force West Virginia
Mountain Association
Mountain Watershed Association
National Association of Development Organizations
National Wildlife Federation
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture
Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light
Pennsylvania Sustainable Business Network
Rivers of Steel Heritage Area
Roots of Unity Media
Sierra Club
Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards
Southwest Clark Neighborhood Assn.
Stewart Family Farms
SWPA Municipal Project Hub
The Tidewater Coalition
Three Rivers Waterkeeper
Tó Nizhóní Ání
Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO
We the People of Detroit
West Virginia AFL-CIO
West Virginia Community Development Hub
West Virginia Environmental Council
West Virginia Land Trust
West Virginia Rivers Coalition
West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO
Wetlands Watch
Working for Justice Ministry St. Paul's United Methodist Church Allison Park, PA