

Committees:

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### Sponsor Testimony on HB 56 Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Chairman Vitale, Vice Chair Kick, and Ranking Member Densen, members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to give testimony on HB 56. I stand before you today to give a summary of a proposal that will promote mine safety, support mine reclamation, and encourage employment for laid-off mine workers.

Coal has long been a reliable source of power for Ohio. But the amount of coal being mined in Ohio and nationally has declined. It used to be the case that Severance Tax Revenue from coal mining at both the federal and state level was the main funding source for reclamation work on pre-law mining sites. While the amount of funding is on the decline, there are many mining sites that still need to be reclaimed.

House Bill 56 will allocate three percent of funds from the Kilowatt Hour Tax Receipt Fund to abandoned mine reclamation and acid mine drainage abatement and treatment. This legislation also calls for earmarking an additional .75 percent of the Kilowatt Hour Tax to the Mine Safety Fund to help with safety training for existing coal miners and for the operation of the Mine Training Center.

The kilowatt hour tax contributes about \$450 million per year for the GRF. This bill would add about \$13.5 million for mine reclamation work and \$3.3 million for mine safety. \$13.5 million would essentially double what is available from the federal government for reclamation and allow a funding source to be in place in case that money dries up.

In many parts of the state—and especially in eastern Ohio—mine reclamation is needed to not only address mine sites themselves, but also streams that have Acid Mine Drainage problems. Restoring these sites will be important to improve all of the land and water that to this day continues to suffer from pre-law coal mining practices.

House Bill 56 requires the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to develop a bidding process that encourages the hiring of dislocated coal miners by companies contracted to complete mine reclamation work.

This proposal is a win-win by addressing the both environmental and economic problems in communities in the coal-producing area of the state: addressing funding shortfalls for mine site reclamation and helping to put displaced miners back to work.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this proposal. I urge your support and will be happy to address any of your questions.