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May 31, 2022

The Honorable Rob McColley  
1 Capital Square  
Senate Building, Room 222  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chairman McColley,

On behalf of the Ohio Coal Association (OCA), I would urge support for the proposed amendment to HB 430 that would facilitate the use of federal funding in the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund. The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provided \$11.3 billion to help reclaim abandoned mine lands (AML) over the next 15 years. Of that, Ohio has been allocated over \$46 million for fiscal year 2022 to reclaim AML. Over the next 15 years Ohio is anticipating a total of \$696 million in federal funding for the program. AML reclamation projects aim to close dangerous mine shafts, eliminate open highwalls, reclaim unstable slopes, and improve water quality by treating acid mine drainage. The allocation provided to states through IJA is determined based on the number of tons of coal historically produced in each state before August 3, 1977, when the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) was enacted.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) solicits bids each year for AML projects. OCA members have been awarded a number of these AML bids, applying their unique expertise and impressive equipment fleets to successfully complete these projects and keep miners working. The resulting environmental improvements and elimination of safety hazards have been impressive. One such project was recently completed at the Division of Wildlife's Powelson Wildlife Area in Muskingum County where over 13,000 feet of open highwall was reclaimed by CCU Coal and Construction, LLC. ODNR has identified dozens of additional projects in need of funding that will both enhance the natural beauty of our State and provide employment opportunities for our residents.

We hope to have the opportunity to work with ODNR on efforts to improve the AML program to ensure the coal industry has the opportunity to bid on projects and participate in AML reclamation and remaining efforts, which will be a great environmental benefit to the State of Ohio.

Thank you for considering these comments. Once again, we urge your support for this important funding for AML reclamation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. D. Cope".

Michael D. Cope, President of The Ohio Coal Association