



Citizens Advisory Council

to the Department of Environmental Protection

P.O. Box 8459 • Rachel Carson State Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8459 • 717-787-8171 • Fax 717-705-4980

April 20, 2021

Dear Senator Casey:

On behalf of the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), I am writing to ask you to support the *Abandoned Mine Land Reauthorization Act* recently introduced in the House of Representatives.

This act, introduced by U.S. Representatives Matt Cartwright (D-PA-08) and Glenn Thompson (R-PA-15), would reauthorize the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Trust Fund fee collection through 2036 and would expand the payments from the fund for abandoned coal mine cleanups.

Since 1980, Pennsylvania's AML Program has accomplished the following to protect public health, safety, and the environment:

- Over 91,400 acres of high priority abandoned coal mine sites have been reclaimed.
- Hazards associated with more than 1,880 open mine shafts and portals have been eliminated.
- Over 1,433,000 linear feet (271 miles, the equivalent of a trip from Harrisburg to Erie) of dangerous highwalls are no longer a threat to people.
- Over 1,800 acres of dangerous piles and embankments have been eliminated and the land reclaimed.
- Over 2,500 AML impacted water supplies have been replaced with clean and reliable water lines and \$142.8 million has been dedicated to abating or treating abandoned mine drainage to improve water quality. PA's AML Inventory consists of 5,597 individual problem areas with 33,965 individual AML features or problems.¹

Additionally, the AML program currently contributes approximately \$80 million to Pennsylvania's economy annually through construction and service contracts, salaries, and state and local tax revenues.

The current AML fee is set to expire in 2021 leaving billions of dollars in unreclaimed abandoned mine hazards across Pennsylvania and the nation with no resources. Pennsylvania has almost \$4 billion of unreclaimed, high-priority abandoned mine lands that would be left unchecked if the AML Trust Fund fee collection is not reauthorized.

¹See *Pennsylvania's Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act Funded Abandoned Mine Lands Program: Past, Present, and Future* at https://files.dep.state.pa.us/Mining/Abandoned%20Mine%20Reclamation/AbandonedMinePortalFiles/AML_Fact_Sheet_Final_2019_03_11.pdf.

CAC urges you to support the *Abandoned Mine Land Reauthorization Act* to provide the vital funding Pennsylvania needs to protect our citizens and natural resources. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further please contact our Executive Director, Keith J. Salador, by phone at 717-787-8171 or by email at ksalador@pa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jerome Shabazz". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jerome Shabazz
Chair