



# West Virginia Coal Association

200 Association Drive, Ste. 160, Charleston, WV 25311 • (304) 342-4153 • Fax 342-7651 •

[www.wvcoal.com](http://www.wvcoal.com)

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Nick Preservati, Deputy Secretary  
West Virginia Department of Commerce  
Main Capital Complex  
Charleston, West Virginia 25311

Dear Deputy Secretary Preservati:

Thanks again for addressing our Annual Membership Meeting last week. As I'm sure you gathered from our members, there is tremendous energy and expectation regarding the opportunities we have today to advance our industry with President Trump in the White House and committed state leadership eager to support coal in every way possible.

As you know, President Trump has issued multiple Executive Orders to secure coal as a leading energy source, specifically emphasizing coal-fired electricity to power data center and other industrial facilities. The President and his energy team have also taken specific action to reopen recently closed plants and to require utilities to continue operating coal plants previously scheduled for deactivation.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Interior and other federal agencies have moved to repeal and replace multiple regulations and policies that were designed to hurt coal or reduce coal-fired electricity. These same federal agencies, along with others including the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service have issued expedited and emergency procedures to facilitate coal mine permitting in order to satisfy President Trump's domestic energy dominance goals.

There is no doubt where President Trump stands in his commitment to ensure that coal flourishes under his leadership.

President Trump's Executive Orders, the federal deregulatory actions and expedited permitting directives combined with the coal provisions recently enacted in HB 2014, have created high but entirely realistic expectations that West Virginia coal will serve a critical role in meeting forecasted electric power and industrial energy demands. The opportunities provided by the dramatic shift in federal energy policy and HB 2014 can create new mining jobs across the state, and maximizes payroll and state revenues. These expectations are reasonable, as the new state requirements are designed to upgrade coal plants so they can operate at optimal levels while extending their operational life.

Additionally, there are several existing state programs and recent law changes that, if fully implemented, could complement these initiatives and further assist our industry in reaching its full potential. These include:

1. HB 3482 (Coal-Fired Grid Stabilization and Energy Security Act) which directs the WV Department of Economic Development to identify locations around the state that could accommodate new coking plants or coal plants. This legislation consumed a tremendous amount of legislative resources and time during the 2023 Regular Legislative Session and expressly requires the WV Development Office “to provide as much assistance as possible to grow and sustain the coal generation segment of the state’s economy.” HB 3482 was also intended to encourage the Development Office to focus greater attention on the state’s leading industry. Implementation of this statute would provide the Development Office with a valuable tool to attract data centers or other industrial facilities to take full advantage of our energy reserves and developed mining infrastructure. A copy of HB 3482 is attached.

2. On May 27 of this year, we convened a meeting of legislative leaders, coal industry representatives and members of the Governor’s staff to review and begin implementation of the coal provisions in HB 2014. The assembled group specifically discussed the need to reach out to the Trump Administration to express our interest in to collaborate with Department of Energy and other federal agencies on modernizing and upgrading the state’s coal generation fleet. We concluded the May meeting with a decision to send a letter on behalf of the state’s "coal team," signed by the Governor, Senate President Smith, and House Speaker Hanshaw to President Trump, Energy Secretary Wright and the White House Energy Dominance Council. We are scheduling a follow up meeting in conjunction with legislative Interim meetings in September. Please join us if your schedule allows.

3. The Public Energy Authority (PEA) was reactivated under Governor Justice to provide another avenue for the state to protect, promote and manage its existing electric generation assets and energy reserves, while providing valuable assistance to the state’s coal industry. Unfortunately, the PEA has not fulfilled its expectation and has only met once this year, despite President Trump declaring a national energy emergency and issuing several Executive Orders to protect the electric grid and coal as critical energy source. The PEA should be regarded as an integral part of the Governor’s executive resources. Just as President Trump has enlisted multiple federal agencies under the White House Energy Dominance Council (the Department of Energy, EPA, Interior and others) Governor Morrissey could do the same with the PEA, incorporating it as key part of the executive branch. Several members of the Governor’s cabinet serve on the PEA, and an active engaged EPA would ensure these valuable cabinet members remain fully engaged in coal and energy matters. I've attached a copy of the press release when the PEA was restarted reflecting this clear intent.

4. In 2023, the Legislature passed HB 3303, revamping the state Coalfield Community Development Office so it would be more responsive to the needs of the coal industry. The newly revised Office was directed to undertake several tasks to assist the coal industry. First, it was to work with end users of West Virginia coal to protect markets and to expand the use of West Virginia coal. The Office is currently implementing this directive and has established dialogue with several West Virginia thermal coal customers. However, the other unfulfilled duties and responsibilities, if implemented would offer tremendous value to the state’s coal industry. The revised law directed Coalfield Development to recruit and train the next generation of miners. A properly designed recruitment strategy could also serve to promote the industry—a function of the Office that is especially needed today. Towards

that end, West Virginia should use this office and its energy education program to promote the state and its coal assets to attract data centers and other industrial facilities to the state

5. We are extremely concerned about the status of the 1,300 MW coal fired Pleasants Power Station. Rumors consistently circulate regarding the operational ability of the facility and the efforts to repurpose the plant with using a major investment from West Virginia. Given the national energy emergency declared by the President and recent emergency “must run” orders issued for coal fired power plants by the Department of Energy and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the ability of Pleasants to produce electricity as a conventional coal plant should immediately be secured West Virginia. Action by the state to protect the physical and mechanical integrity of the plant and its ability to generate power not only protects the state’s considerable investment but secures it economic benefit. Running as a conventional coal plant, Pleasants provides hundreds of direct jobs and supports thousands of others in the downstream economy, including hundreds of coal mining jobs

As the country’s largest producer of high quality thermal, industrial and metallurgical coal, West Virginia has a unique opportunity to lead and establish coal and energy policy for the entire nation. With a Governor who has consistently defended coal on the national stage, our state is uniquely positioned to work in tandem with President Trump’s leadership to bring about a true renaissance for coal.

By moving quickly and decisively, we can expand coal mining, strengthen our energy infrastructure, and restore coal to its rightful place at the center of America’s energy future.

It is essential that we move quickly to engage with the Trump Administration and identify the resources and support needed to accelerate the modernization and expansion of West Virginia’s coal fleet. We have already initiated outreach to the White House, Congressional leaders, and key federal officials to convene a series of meetings in September. With your leadership and active participation, we can present a united “coal team” for West Virginia and ensure that our state seizes this moment to lead America’s energy future. I look forward to meeting you soon to discuss these programs

Sincerely,

Chris Hamilton  
President, WVCA

CC: Tom McCaffery, Governor Morrissey’s Chief of Staff  
Matt Herridge, Secretary WV Commerce  
Todd Johnston, Governor Morrissey’s Energy Liaison