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January 17, 2017

The Honorable Ernest Moniz
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independent Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Moniz:

I write to you today in support of an application jointly submitted by Penn State University, Texas Mineral Resources Corporation, and Indenture Renewables/K Technologies to receive financial assistance through the Department of Energy's (DOE) "Production of Salable Rare Earth Element Materials from Coal and Coal By-Products" funding opportunity.

It is my understanding that the pilot program proposed in this application would utilize soil overburden from Jeddo Coal Company's anthracite mining operation in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Jeddo has been in the mining business for over 80 years and remains a major producer of anthracite coal. DOE's own studies have shown the Appalachian coal fields like those mined by Jeddo contain some of the most favorable concentrations of Rare Earth Elements (REEs). Similarly, Penn State's research has shown that the REEs can be extracted from these Appalachian coal byproducts using ion exchange, which is more environmentally friendly and requires less energy than current extraction methods.

As a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I am dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of our country. Given that REEs are instrumental in our defense weapons systems, I believe it is important that we find a domestic source rather than continuing to rely on China for these critical products.

Further, as the former mayor of Hazleton and a member of the Congressional Coal Caucus, I know how important anthracite coal production is to the region. The possibility of future, large-scale REEs production from anthracite coal presents a unique opportunity for job creation and economic growth.

The REEs extraction proposal submitted by Penn State University, Texas Mineral Resources Corporation, and Indenture Renewables/K Technologies would enhance our national security and stimulate our national economy. Therefore, I would like to request that this application for the DOE's "Production of Salable Rare Earth Element Materials from Coal and Coal By-Products" funding opportunity receive your full and fair consideration.

Thank you for your kind attention to my request.

All my best,

Lou Barletta
Member of Congress