Dear Congresswoman:

I am writing this letter as a concerned citizen living in Kentucky. I am extremely concerned about the fate of the Abandoned Mine Land Collection fees. As a result of the passage of the 2005 appropriations bill, Congress has been granted the opportunity to continue to work towards a compromise that will lead to a reauthorization of the Office of Surface Mining's authority to continue to collect Abandoned Mine Land fees. This translates into an extremely important opportunity to continue the good work being done throughout this state to reclaim health and safety and environmental problems posed by abandoned mines. On behalf of the citizens in the coal regions of Kentucky, I ask your support and leadership to act now to ensure that this work, and the jobs it creates, is continued now and well into the future.

As a citizen of Kentucky, a state highly dependent on coal production, I have experienced first hand the dangers posed by abandoned mines. However, as a concerned citizen I am also aware of the good work being done throughout Kentucky to restore our lands and streams using federal funding from the Abandoned Mine Land Fund. Much has been done, but much more needs to be done.

The OSM fee collection authority has been extended through June 30, 2005, and, as a result, we have been given a small window of opportunity. We must act now to ensure that the important work being done by our AML program can continue now and into the future. I urge you to work within and across your party lines to support the efforts to reauthorize the AML fee and continue this worthwhile and effective program.