

<http://www.maced.org/power-plus-plan-statement.htm>

MACED statement on announcement of President Obama's proposed budget plan to aid Central Appalachian communities

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Berea, Ky. – The POWER Plus Plan announced by President Obama today is a welcome and hopeful sign that brings with it much opportunity for coalfield communities. MACED believes smart federal investment is essential for creating a brighter economic future in the Appalachian region, and the Power Plus Plan is a major boost to regional economic transition initiatives already taking place.

The four pillars of the POWER Plus plan are as follows:

1. New and accelerated investment in Abandoned Mine Land Communities. One billion dollars will be invested over five years to reclaim land and create jobs and other economic opportunity.
2. Proposed increases to economic development and workforce development programs. This will include increased federal investments in programs critical to coalfield communities including the Appalachian Regional Commission, USDA Rural Development, EPA Brownfield programs, Economic Development Administration programs and others.
3. Ensure solvency to the UMWA health and retirement fund through legislative reforms and new investments.
4. Create new tax incentives to drive the development and use of Carbon Capture, Utilization and Sequestration technologies for coal and gas-fired power plants to reduce air born emissions.

The majority of these programs will provide critical investments necessary to propel Appalachia forward. The programs will support critical activities including community based planning for economic development, implementation of existing planning activities including those identified in the Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) process and direct investment in job creating activities.

These investments can help expand healthy Appalachian forests, repair damaged and polluted streams, support energy efficiency and grow a foundation for strong entrepreneurship support. These efforts have the real potential for near-term job creation and can result in longer-term economic opportunities.

For decades, the Appalachian region provided the coal necessary for the industrialization of the United States. As young people, enterprises and communities across the region seek a new vision for economic prosperity, the POWER Plus plan can provide the resources and technical assistance necessary to make their vision a reality. This is a huge step toward complementing existing – and creating new – meaningful public-private partnerships needed to create a brighter Appalachian future.