

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Mountaintop remover

Back in 2015, Pottstown's representative in Congress, Ryan Costello, was one of just 10 Republicans to sign a resolution declaring that human activity contributes to climate change and calling for action to respond to the threat.



Commentary by
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Now that Donald Trump is president, Rep. Costello is changing his tune.

Earlier this month, Costello voted with his Republican colleagues to rescind the "stream protection rule" that makes it more difficult for coal companies to blow up mountaintops to get at coal and then dump mining waste into streams and other waterways.

Coal is the dirtiest of fossil fuels. For more than two centuries, mining coal has been a leading cause of environmental degradation, and burning it is the No. 1 cause of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.

There was a time when coal was a necessary evil. Coal fueled the industrial revolution, which vastly increased the quality of human life.

But the future belongs to renewable energy such as wind and solar, which avoids pollution both on land and in the air.

Moreover, renewable energy promises to create hundreds of thousands of safe, good-paying jobs. Even the Chinese are cutting back on coal-fired power plants and investing heavily in technologies to create clean

sources of electricity.

Pennsylvania has an enormous legacy of environmental destruction from mining coal. According to the US Geological Survey, drainage from abandoned coal mines has contaminated more than 3,000 miles of streams and associated ground waters in the Commonwealth. The estimated cost of repairing the damage ranges from \$5 billion to \$15 billion.

Changing technologies have always forced the American workforce to adapt for the advancement of society.

Instead of clinging to an obsolete industry, Congress should focus its efforts on re-training coal miners for industries that help, not hurt, mankind.

Ironically, Pennsylvania's first STEM Academy (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) is located in Costello's district.



Rep. Ryan Costello

Climate change is humanity's greatest existential crisis. Scientists worldwide agree the earth is warming with disastrous, almost inconceivable transformations to come.

Congress can change political rules and laws, but it can't change the laws of physics.

Costello represents one of the most educated and sophisticated congressional districts in America. His constituents deserve better.



A Virginia mountaintop is blown up to facilitate the removal of coal. The waste is dumped into nearby valleys. Rep. Costello voted to nullify a new rule designed to protect streams from being polluted with such debris.