

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

April 18, 2018

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
INTELLIGENCE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, Northwest
Washington, DC 200600

Dear President Trump,

I write to urge your Administration to consider using the tools embodied in the Defense Production Act of 1950¹ to prevent the impending retirement of numerous coal-fired and nuclear power plants that are critical to ensuring the resilience and reliability of our electric grid and the security of our nation.

As I have discussed with you and Secretary Perry previously, many coal-fired units are currently at risk of closure or retirement. As recent extreme weather events show, the loss of these units poses a significant risk to the electric grid. Coal-fired and nuclear power plants provide resilient and reliable power that delivers when the bulk power system is put to the test. In the case of coal specifically, the National Energy Technology Lab stated that, during the 2018 Bomb Cyclone at the height of peak demand on January 5, 2018, “had coal been removed, a 9-18 GW shortfall would have developed.”² NETL went on to conclude that, “In the case of PJM, it can also be shown that the demand could not have been met without coal.”³

The security of our homeland is inextricably tied to the security of our energy supply. The ability to produce reliable electricity is critical to ensuring our nation’s security against the various threats facing us today – whether those threats be extreme weather events or adversarial foreign actors. The Defense Production Act of 1950 grants the President the authority to ensure that the nation’s domestic industrial base is capable of providing the essential materials and resources needed to defend our nation and protect our sovereignty. It recognizes energy production and critical infrastructure as strategic and crucial to that goal.

When President Roosevelt declared that universal freedom was predicated on the United States being the “arsenal for democracy”, the coal industry kept the lights on in the factories, plants, and shipyards across the country. And it is ready and willing to continue to do so, but this industry and the men and women who work in it can no longer do it alone.

While we cannot undo the damage done by the previous Administration that turned its back on these hardworking Americans, we do have an opportunity to recognize the unique role this

¹ P.L. 81-774, 50 U.S.C. §4501 et seq.

² National Energy Technology Lab. Department of Energy. “Reliability, Resilience, and the Oncoming Wave of Retiring Baseload Units, Volume I: The Critical Role of Thermal Units during Extreme Weather Events.” Mar 13, 2018. Available at <https://www.netl.doe.gov/research/energy-analysis>. Last accessed April 6, 2018.

³ *Id.*

industry plays in protecting and promoting our national security, and I stand ready to do everything I can to help you in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator