TESTIMONY OF
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BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Bradley M. Campbell, Regional Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in Philadelphia. The Mid-Atlantic Region includes Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Thank you for the invitation to talk to you this afternoon about the impact of abandoned mine drainage (ADM) on the streams and economy of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

More than 175 years of coal mining in Pennsylvania has left a legacy of approximately $15 billion in abandoned mine problems that dot the landscape in 45 of the State's 67 counties (source: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection). These problems include: more than 2,500 miles of streams polluted by acid mine drainage; 250,000 acres of unreclaimed surface mine land; 100 million cubic feet of burning coal refuse and potential subsidence problems for hundreds of thousands acres.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania reports that abandoned mine drainage is the most significant source of surface water quality degradation in Pennsylvania. Drainage from mining sites pollutes at least 2,500 miles of streams representing 52% of all degraded

streams in the Commonwealth. Other sources of degradation include agriculture (impacting 694 miles), municipal sewage treatment plants (impacting 241 miles), and industrial point sources (impacting 206 miles). Pennsylvania estimates that more than $67 million is lost each year in recreational values as a result of acid mine drainage.

Eliminating acid mine drainage alone from abandoned mines will require a $5 billion investment in Pennsylvania alone. (Source: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection). The $15 billion estimate for all acid mine related problems includes this $5 billion for acid mine drainage. Over recent decades, the State has aggressively sought to treat acid mine drainage from abandoned mine lands, and to prevent contamination from permitted active mining operations. Despite these concerted efforts, much still remains to be accomplished.

Resolving the AMD problem is a real challenge requiring both an investment of resources and innovative technical approaches. For example, since 1994, when EPA assigned greater priority to the acid mine drainage problems from abandoned mine lands, the Agency has devoted more than $12 million to addressing these problems. The sources of these funds have principally been from the Clean Water Act Section 319 Non-Point Source Program, and from the Section 104(b)(3) State allotments. Additionally, since 1995, $2 million of the above monies have been expended in eastern Pennsylvania on AMD projects with State and local partners.

I would like to emphasize that a number of federal agencies play a role in the federal effort to address the environmental impacts of coal mining. These include, the Department of Interior's Office of Surface Mining (OSM), the Department of Agriculture's

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL). These and other federal agencies are represented on the Eastern Mine Drainage Federal Consortium, chaired by EPA. Several concerned coal-producing States also have combined their efforts to develop comprehensive watershed restoration strategies to address those environmental impacts and to improve water quality in the areas where abandoned mines are located.

My colleague from the Office of Surface Mining will discuss the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund. States and grassroots' organizations have asked Congress for increased appropriations from this Fund; as of 1999, there was approximately $1.25 billion in the Fund, of which Pennsylvania received $22 million for projects impacting public health and safety, and $2.2 million in the "10% set aside" for AMD remediation. Clearly, this Fund is an important source of funding.

Several years ago, after taking a hard look at the serious water pollution problems around the country, the Administration concluded that simply implementing existing programs was not stopping serious new water pollution threats to public health and living resources of the Nation's waters. The Administration concluded that clean water programs lacked the strength, resources, and framework to finish the job of restoring rivers, lakes, and coastal areas.

In response to this concern, the President announced, in February of 1998, a major new effort to speed the restoration of the Nation's waterways. The **Clean Water Action Plan** builds on the solid foundation of the Clean Water Act and describes over 100 actions

-- based on existing statutory authority -- to strengthen efforts to restore and protect our nation's waters.

The **Clean Water Action Plan** is built around four key tools to achieve clean water goals: a watershed approach, strong federal and State standards, natural resource stewardship, and informed citizens and officials. Let me talk briefly about the first two. With the watershed approach, the Clean Water Action Plan envisions an improved collaborative effort by federal, State, Tribal, and local governments; the public; and the private sector to restore and sustain the health of the over 2,000 watersheds in the country. The watershed approach provides a framework for water quality management and is a key to setting priorities and taking action to clean up rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.

With strong federal and State standards, EPA and States will address point sources of pollution contributing to impaired waterways. As an example of complying with those standards, we might want to look at the State's nomination of stream segments which appear on the list of waterways impaired by various pollutants including those from coal mine drainage. The State -- or if the State is incapable, EPA -- is developing resource management plans for these stream segments. These plans, also known as Total Maximum Daily Loadings or TMDLs, involve a broad spectrum of stakeholders in developing pollution allocations and implementation plans with the goal of restoring the habitat and bringing the stream segments to their previous uses.

We are making good progress in implementing the over 100 specific actions described in the Clean Water Action Plan. Congress has provided vital support to this work by appropriating critical funding, including almost doubling funding for reducing

polluted runoff to the level of $200 million per year. A key action item of the Plan requires EPA and the Office of Surface Mining to increase by 50% the number of cooperative projects to clean up rivers and streams polluted by coal mine drainage. This objective has been achieved. EPA has also successfully partnered with the Office of Surface Mining, the Natural Resources Conservation Services, the Corps of Engineers, and the National Energy Technology Laboratory in investigating new technical responses to the AMD problems, as well. The Clean Water Action Plan is a sound blueprint for implementing clean water programs in this new century.

In the FY 2000 Budget, the Administration proposed a new tool that would have given States, Tribes, and local communities another mechanism they could have used to create healthy, livable communities and thriving economies. Better America Bonds could have been used to fund projects that preserve and enhance open space, clean up brownfields, and protect water quality. They could have offered communities like Scranton creative ways to restore our environment and improve the quality of life. Land trust groups, environmentalists, business leaders, and other groups would have had an opportunity to define specific ways to address acid mine problems.

The Better America Bonds program would have been administered in a similar manner as EPA's successful Brownfields program. The Brownfields program has helped more than 300 communities leverage more than $1 billion to clean up and redevelop abandoned properties.

As a part of the Administration's Livability Agenda, the Better America Bonds proposal was included in the President's proposed FY2000 budget. To become law, it

required a change in the tax code. On Capitol Hill, versions of the Better America Bonds proposal were introduced -- in the House of Representatives, "Better America Bonds Act" (HR 2446) and in the Senate, the "Community Open Space Bonds Act" (S.1558). Better America Bonds remain a high priority for the Administration and EPA.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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