**ReImagine Appalachia – Report**

**August 2021**

ReImagine Appalachia was established with the acknowledgement that the economy has not been working in the Ohio Valley (Pittsburgh PA to Huntington WV). Leaders from economic, environmental, community and grassroots organizations came together to form this group in order to transform Appalachia into a 21st century economy that is good for workers, communities, and the environment. The purposes regarding employment are to create good jobs, give coal workers priority (as we move away from extractive industries), and build career leaders to jobs that can earn a livable wage. The overall goals of ReImagine Appalachia are to: repair the damage done in the 20th century to the earth and waters of the region, modernize the electric grid, and expand manufacturing by making it efficient and clean.

Jean Ambrose, who serves on the leadership team of Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action approached the Wood County (WV) Commissioners about a resolution in support of ReImagine Appalachia. Surprisingly, the Commissioners agreed, and the text of the resolution is attached.

Energized by Jean’s success, I contacted Kevin Ritter, President of the Washington County Commissioners and spoke to him on the phone about the resolution, mentioning that the Wood County Commissioners have endorsed it. He agreed to review the resolution and let me know his response and that of the other commissioners. I also called Geoff Schenkel, Marietta City Councilman, about the resolution. He seemed very interested; I sent him a copy of the resolution as well. I also contacted Marietta Mayor Josh Schlicher and let him know that I had contacted Goeff, raising the idea of the resolution at City Council. If there is a discussion at a council meeting, it would be helpful to have some residents of the city (I am not) to speak for the resolution.

I think that the issues raised by ReImagine Appalachia provide a way to bring conservatives and environmentalists into some common ground. I just learned of some grant opportunities that ReImagine Appalachia is promoting. These might be a means to advance the Mid-Ohio Valley into the reality that ReImagine Appalachia envisions.

I’ll keep this group apprised of the response of local public officials to this initiative and may ask for help in promoting it locally.

George Banziger