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**Chris Wood**  
*President & CEO*

June 20, 2017

The Honorable Darin LaHood  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative LaHood:

On behalf of Trout Unlimited's (TU) 300,000 members and supporters nationwide, I am writing to thank you for introducing the Community Reclamation Partnerships Act of 2017.

TU's mission is to conserve, protect, and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and the watersheds they depend on. In pursuit of this mission, TU has worked to restore streams and rivers damaged by pollution from abandoned mines from the Appalachian coalfields to the hardrock mining areas of the Rocky Mountain states. TU stands ready to expand our work to clean-up abandoned mine pollution, but we need passage of the Community Reclaimer legislation to make it happen.

As a member representing a district that contains abandoned coal mines, you know that this bill is badly needed. Americans want clean water, but as you know, millions of Americans live in communities tarnished each day by streams polluted by abandoned coal mines.

Sadly, much of abandoned coal mine pollution is "out of sight, out of mind." Cleaning up abandoned mines is challenging and expensive. That does not make it any less important. The legacy of historical mining practices — thousands of abandoned coal mines with an estimated clean-up cost in the billions of dollars — has persisted for the better part of a century with insufficient progress toward a solution.

But as our work in Pennsylvania with our partners shows so clearly, help is on the way. Your bill will speed up the clean-up of abandoned coal mine lands and water by allowing Community Reclaimers (also often known as "Good Samaritans") to flourish and succeed. Community Reclaimers are those individuals or entities, such as Trout Unlimited, who have no legal obligation to take on an abandoned mine clean-up but who wish to do so in order to improve water quality and watershed health. In Pennsylvania, more than 300 projects are in operation today cleaning up abandoned coal mine pollution. This type of good work must be expanded in Illinois and other parts of coal country. Your bill will provide a workable, new model to facilitate clean-up projects.

We are grateful for your leadership on the bill, as well as the help provided by Chairman Gosar, and his staff. We appreciate your willingness to allow for ample discussion of the draft, and we applaud the willingness of Ranking Member Lowenthal to work on improvements to it. We hope that ongoing discussions will lead to strong, bipartisan support for the bill.

Thank you for strong support for clean water and cleaning up pollution from abandoned coal mines.

Sincerely,

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**A mission to conserve, protect, & restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.**

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