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MACED President reacts to Obama's climate change announcement

Berea, Ky. (June 25, 2013) – In response to President Obama's plan to cut carbon pollution and mitigate climate change today, Mountain Association for Community Economic Development President Justin Maxson releases the following statement:

“Investments in community and economic development in eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia, one of the regions whose economy has long been dependent on fossil fuels, should accompany the Obama administration's new efforts to reduce carbon pollution. The transition to a cleaner economy can be beneficial to all Americans—even those in coal country—if the right investments are made. Now is a particularly important time for the federal government to invest in Appalachia's economic transition, as the region is suffering under the weight of reduced coal production that has led to thousands of layoffs.

The forces at play in the decline of coal are complex. Declining coal reserves and historically low natural gas prices are playing a major role. Focusing solely on the role of regulations denies the broader reality and prevents a clear-eyed conversation about how to build a stronger economic future.

The weight of the scientific evidence that recognizes the existence of and risks from climate change is substantial. Rather than deny the need to address climate change, coalfield communities need their state, regional and local officials to look to the future and begin building a more diverse economy through investment in entrepreneurship, in key sectors like sustainable forestry and wood products, energy efficiency, local foods and tourism, and through transitional help to workers who have lost their jobs. We, and our leaders, should be pressuring the White House and Congress to ensure Appalachian families and communities are not forgotten by federal policies, but instead become key beneficiaries of investments in a more sustainable economy.”

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