

Testimony of
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Development
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Chairman Argall, Senator Yaw, and members of the Majority Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I also appreciate Lycoming College for hosting this critical discussion. It is a privilege to join you for a conversation focused on the crucial intersection of industry, higher education, and workforce development.

My name is Bill desRosiers, and I serve as Manager of Government & External Affairs at Coterra Energy. For the past 15 years, I have had the opportunity to work directly with education and workforce initiatives across the Commonwealth. These efforts are central to who we are as a company. Over this time, Coterra has invested nearly \$20 million directly into education and workforce development initiatives that strengthen the fabric of the Commonwealth.

For Coterra, these are not simply charitable contributions. They are intentional investments in the communities in which we live and in the workforce we need as an industry.

Overall Education & Workforce Impact

At a high level, our investments span the full continuum of education and workforce development:

- Over the years, we have funded nearly 5,000 scholarships in career and technical education across Pennsylvania. In 2024 alone, we supported 800 scholarships, one of our most significant single-year impacts to date. These scholarships covered costs for career kits, certifications, out-of-pocket training, and participation in programs like SkillsUSA—removing barriers for students whose families or schools could not afford these expenses.
- We proudly support two cornerstone colleges: Lackawanna College's School of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Penn College of Technology. These institutions focus on energy and energy-

adjacent programs that serve not only the energy industry but also the growing data, AI, and advanced manufacturing sectors.

- We helped establish the Susquehanna County Career & Technology (SCCTC) Center CDL school, which has graduated more than 300 drivers to date. About 70 of these graduates were high school seniors who received full scholarships. Graduates have gone on to careers in trucking, electrical line work, heavy equipment, EMS, and even the military.
- Beyond direct scholarships and programs, we have supported hundreds of visits by the Mobile Energy Learning Unit (MELU), an immersive STEM education experience created by the Energy Education Foundation. This initiative brings energy education to schools across the Commonwealth, from Allentown and Pittsburgh to rural communities in the Northern Tier. Demand for this program remains so high that a permanent unit now operates in Pennsylvania.
- We work closely with a growing network of educators and administrators interested in building energy pathway programs. Through our annual Educator Retreat, which rotates through producing basins, we connect them with industry experts, best practices, and like-minded peers, building long-term collaboration.
- Finally, we are investing in immersive technologies to expand opportunities for students to gain meaningful experience on production sites without logistical or age-related restrictions. This spring, Pennsylvania students participated in a national Virtual Reality (VR) pilot that showed strong results and will lead to further investment in immersive learning in the energy space.

High School Career & Technical Centers

Coterra's core strategy is rooted in partnerships with high school CTCs. These centers are at the forefront of preparing students for technical careers, particularly in rural communities where opportunities are limited.

Our longest-standing partnership is with the Susquehanna County Career & Technology Center (SCCTC). When we began developing the Marcellus Shale in Susquehanna County, this rural area had few industrial anchors and limited workforce resources. SCCTC quickly emerged as a natural partner. Our early support was modest—providing equipment and small contributions—but over time, the

relationship grew significantly. Together, we supported the construction of a new building that expanded enrollment and programs, most notably welding.

The welding program has since expanded multiple times to meet the demands of students and industry, adding teachers, modern equipment, and an outdoor fabrication area. Through EITC funding, we helped purchase supplies, especially during the COVID pandemic when metal prices spiked. One of our most unique collaborations was the creation of an outdoor classroom for pipe welding and installation. Most high school welding programs cannot offer pipe welding due to cost and logistics, but SCCTC now has an immersive setup that replicates trench welding in real-world conditions. While welding has been a significant focus, our support extends broadly, encompassing small engine repair, automotive, building and property maintenance, electrical, HVAC, and even nursing. We recognize that all career and technical education disciplines play an essential role in the workforce.

Looking forward, SCCTC is launching a diesel technology program with opportunities in compression and power generation, funded through the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP). This program has been in high demand, but its cost and complexity have delayed its implementation. We are proud to help make it a reality.

Another essential collaboration is SCCTC's energy pathway program with Lackawanna College's School of Petroleum & Natural Gas. Access to energy-specific coursework at the high school level has historically been limited. By pioneering dual enrollment in petroleum and natural gas courses, SCCTC created a model now replicated at other CTCs. Approximately 150–200 students each year now earn credits toward both high school and Lackawanna College, breaking down barriers and reshaping perceptions about who is eligible for college-level programs. Coterra funds this initiative through EITC and has committed to increasing support as enrollment grows.

Finally, SCCTC spearheaded the creation of a CDL school serving northern tier counties and neighboring New York communities. The nearly \$1 million project was beyond the reach of sending districts, but through a consortium of businesses, SCCTC opened the CDL facility in 2020. To date, more than 300 graduates, including 70 high school seniors on scholarships, have earned their CDL. Demand continues to exceed capacity, with classes fully booked well in advance.

Beyond Susquehanna County, we have expanded support to 26 different CTCs across Pennsylvania—from the Lehigh Valley to State College, Pittsburgh, and the Northern Tier. Two schools I would like to highlight are Parkway West CTC near Pittsburgh and Western Area CTC in Washington County. Through

EITC, we provide scholarships and supplies, and through NAP, we fund direct investments to meet critical needs. Parkway West, for example, expanded its welding program with a new second floor and, just a year later, added an outdoor fabrication area. Western Area expanded its CDL program with new trucks, trailers, and a state-of-the-art simulator.

I chose to highlight these two schools because they are among the most geographically removed from our operations, yet they clearly demonstrate the tremendous impact programs like EITC and NAP can have. Their success proves that when these tools are leveraged effectively by both industry and government, they can transform technical education and expand workforce opportunities across the entire Commonwealth.

Lackawanna College School of Petroleum & Natural Gas

We recognized early on that Pennsylvania lacked a dedicated program to prepare students for careers in natural gas production and related energy fields such as pipeline and compression. To fill this critical gap, Coterra partnered with Lackawanna College to help establish the School of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Our initial \$2.5 million investment created an endowment and provided the foundation for what has since become a national model of workforce training. The results speak for themselves: placement rates exceed 90 percent, with graduates transitioning directly into family-sustaining careers, many of whom now hold leadership roles within the industry.

But we didn't stop there. As our relationship evolved, we continued to invest in Lackawanna College, contributing an additional \$1 million through NAP to help the school expand its offerings in robotics, IT security, and electric vehicle technologies. While not strictly energy-specific, these fields share core technical and educational foundations with the energy sector, which is why aligning them with workforce development is so important.

Put another way, oil and gas development today is a form of advanced manufacturing, and the workforce must be prepared to operate in a world where automation, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies are the norm. At Lackawanna, students can simultaneously explore these opportunities and, as they work through their studies, pivot into more specialized fields based on their interests and career goals. Just as importantly, aligning oil and natural gas production with advanced manufacturing helps dispel misconceptions that our industry is old, dirty, or morally wrong. This alignment broadens the pool of qualified candidates and improves society's perception of the energy industry.

Lackawanna continues to share its needs with us, and we remain active partners—supporting the growth of its programs, engaging with students, and promoting its energy pathways to our high school CTC partners across the state.

Penn College of Technology

From our perspective at Coterra, the success of Pennsylvania's energy industry depends not only on direct energy jobs, but also on the thousands of skilled workers in energy-adjacent fields—welders, electricians, HVAC specialists, machinists, and service providers. Without these roles, our industry would grind to a halt. That understanding is why we expanded our investments beyond traditional energy programs, such as the Lackawanna College School of Petroleum & Natural Gas, and into a broader set of technical fields through Penn College of Technology (PCT), which sustains both the industry and its partners. To date, we have invested nearly \$4 million to strengthen PCT's welding and electrical programs, support veterans, and modernize facilities.

Our most significant step at PCT has been a two-year commitment, through EITC funding, to cover the full cost of dual enrollment for every high school student in Pennsylvania who wishes to participate in the College's programs. This commitment has opened doors for students across the Commonwealth—removing financial barriers and giving them a head start on college credits and technical experience before they graduate from high school. This investment not only strengthens our existing relationships with the 26 career and technical schools already mentioned, but it has also helped build new partnerships with other CTCs across the Commonwealth—benefiting both Penn College and Coterra.

Through NAP, we have supported expansions in architecture, electrical, electronics, HVAC, and welding. These are not peripheral programs to us; they are core to keeping the industry running and competitive. It is also worth noting that PCT has an outstanding reputation, a strong alum base, and deep business support. The College most likely would have raised the funding for these program expansions on its own over time. But NAP funding allowed PCT to move faster and more efficiently—precisely what the program was designed to do.

Even with these investments, demand continues to outpace capacity, underscoring the urgency of this challenge. Penn College regularly shares its emerging needs with us, and we are working side by side to identify additional opportunities where we can provide support—whether financially, in-kind, or by leveraging partners within our network.

Immersive Technology, Virtual Reality, and Educators

Building on our partnerships with CTCs and colleges, Coterra is pioneering the use of immersive technology and virtual reality (VR) to expand access and raise the quality of workforce training. These programs give students exposure to our industry in ways that were once reserved only for interns or new hires. Through VR, students can enhance their classroom energy pathway experiences with the same training we provide to employees in the field—delivered in a logistically simpler environment, free from age, maturity, or technical experience restrictions.

Importantly, VR ensures that every student receives the same high-quality instruction without adding strain to our already limited workforce. Deploying additional headsets across the Commonwealth is also cost-effective, allowing us to scale programs to new high schools and colleges quickly.

This spring, Pennsylvania students participated in a national pilot program, demonstrating a 90 percent improvement on both pre- and post-tests. Collectively, they logged hours learning industry-specific functions such as turning wells on and off, replacing regulators, and soaping wells. Looking ahead to this fall, we see opportunities to enhance the VR experience by combining classroom work with in-field demonstrations. These advanced hybrid experiences will better prepare students for exciting careers in the energy space.

Just as significant as the technology itself is our investment in educators. We have hosted teachers and administrators from across the country, building meaningful partnerships with energy pathway educators who shape the classroom experience every day. Many of these educators have been actively involved in the design and build-out of our VR system from the start, ensuring that it is not just another tool for them to manage, but a true value-add that aligns with curriculum and enhances instruction. By engaging educators early and consistently, we are building a system that supports their needs and maximizes the impact on students.

Charting the Path Forward

What I've outlined are examples of how industry can lead. But government has an equally critical role to play, and I recommend that this committee focus on several key areas to strengthen the connection between education—both CTCs and colleges—and workforce development across the Commonwealth:

Increase investment in Career & Technical Centers (CTCs). These schools are consistently underfunded, yet they remain one of the most effective ways to train both high school students

and adult learners. They serve as the bridge between secondary education and two-year technical degrees, and their impact is central to Pennsylvania's future workforce. Tax credit programs have already proven to be an effective way to increase funding and should remain a priority.

Continue to increase funding for EITC and NAP. These programs are already modern, effective tools that unlock significant private-sector investment. Sustained increases in funding will ensure more schools and students benefit from the resources they generate. The fact that each program usually has a waitlist to participate in suggests there is room—and demand—to expand them further.

Encourage more industry support at the two-year institution level through dual enrollment. Pennsylvania is home to some of the most successful two-year colleges in the country. By promoting and expanding dual enrollment, particularly for CTC students, the state can help industry and education work together to build a stronger, more seamless pipeline from high school to higher education and into the workforce.

Support innovation through immersive and virtual training. VR and other immersive tools are just beginning to take root. By ensuring that all schools—from inner cities to rural districts—have access to these technologies, Pennsylvania can equalize opportunity and prepare students with cutting-edge skills in a cost-effective way.

Taken together, these recommendations would empower education, strengthen workforce development, and allow industry to expand its impact even further. The opportunities are real, and the need is urgent.

Closing

For Coterra, education and workforce development are not add-ons; they are central to our strategy, as both an energy producer and a community builder. Without a skilled workforce, the energy industry cannot thrive, communities cannot grow, and Pennsylvania will struggle to attract new industries and investment. By investing in people through education and workforce development initiatives, we are directly investing in Pennsylvania's future.

We are incredibly proud of the nearly \$20 million we've invested in education and workforce, and prouder still of the thousands of students and adult learners whose futures are brighter because of

these opportunities. Now is the time to build on that momentum and ensure Pennsylvania not only leads the nation in energy production but also sets the standard for aligning education with workforce opportunity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions.