ARC testimony – 4/20/06 – Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

My name is Ken Reed and I serve as the Development Director for the Vinton County Board of Commissioners. I would like to thank the Committee for giving me this opportunity to share with you the impact Appalachian Regional Commission funding has made in my community.

Vinton County is one of the most economically distressed, most rural counties in Ohio. For the last 16 years I have been a community and economic development practitioner working to improve the quality of life there. Daily, I face the challenge of trying to address many basic human needs with limited resources.

Over the years, ARC funding had been an invaluable resource in implementing new projects in my community. Without ARC funds Vinton County would not have 9-1-1 service, our only dental clinic would not have equipment, and many residents would not have a reliable, affordable source of potable water.

Vinton County has been successful in using ARC funds to leverage additional state, federal and private funds. Without ARC funds Vinton County would not be able to access these additional financial resources. In a community such as mine, with very limited local resources, ARC has been an invaluable source of matching funds for many projects that would not have happened had it not been for ARC funds.

Having administered a wide variety of state and federally funded programs over the years, I can testify to the efficacy of ARC funding. Working in tandem with the State of Ohio, through the Governor's Office of Appalachia, and the local development district, we at the local level are able to develop potential ARC projects and prioritize them. This local input insures that local needs are identified and addressed by those who are most familiar with the area.

ARC funding has had a quantifiable impact on the quality of life in Vinton County. I implore this Committee to reauthorize the ARC so that we can continue to improve conditions in my community. The Bible says "a man reaps what he sows". How true that is of the ARC. The local projects that have been seeded with ARC funds have resulted in a harvest of improved living conditions for the residents of Vinton County. If you continue to furnish us with the seeds, we at the local level will continue to plant, water and cultivate, and we as a society will all reap the benefits.