

Press Conference: West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice

The following transcript provides excerpts of remarks by West Virginia Governor Jim Justice at his Nov. 13 press conference, reporting on the West Virginia-China energy and manufacturing agreement.

Gov. Justice was accompanied by his Commerce Secretary, H. Wood Thrasher, who headed the state's largest civil engineering firm before being tapped for the position by Gov. Justice, and by Brian Anderson, director of the West Virginia University (WVU) Energy Institute and chief technical advisor of the deal for the state. Both officials made significant remarks in addition to the Governor. See the full [video of the hour-long press conference](#).

Gov. Jim Justice: Well, sit down everybody. I'm sure you know why you're here, but there's been incredible things happening again to West Virginia. We're truly on our way. And we're doing what I truly believe is the right thing, and the right thing for our citizens. It gives us hope, it gives us jobs, it gives us real life.

When I walked in here [in Jan. 2017], it was a pretty dismal situation, to say the least. When you inherited a \$500 million deficit, it really wasn't any fun. We'd drained rainy day [emergency funds]... The coal business was dismal to say the very least. What are you going to do? ... We had a terrible fire in Wood County, and they didn't know what to do. The contractor that was shooting water on the fire, the county didn't have any money [to pay]. The county was on the verge of going bankrupt. Somebody had to make a decision, and I did. I made the decision that the State would back them up ... The alternative was just as simple as mud. The place was burning, for cryin' out loud ... We didn't just throw our hands up and say 'Well, there's nothing we can do.'

It goes back to my dad. I can remember standing in front of my dad, and saying, 'There's nothing I can do, Dad.' And all of a sudden the whole desk explodes, he grabs me around my shirt ... and says, 'There's always

something you can do, and you better damn well always remember that.'

At the end of the day ... it doesn't matter if you're Democrat, Republican or Independent. It's high time that we all just grab the rope together as West Virginians, and run across the finish line ... I'm really proud of the relationship I have, of the participation from our President. Now whether you like him or not, he's our President ... He really can help West Virginia, and he's doing it right now, right in front of us...

We got a real opportunity. Just imagine this, for a second. Who in the world can even begin to describe what \$83.7 billion dollars of money investments is? Well, I'll tell you what it is: 83,700 million-dollar investments. Now just think about that. For cryin' out loud, it absolutely takes your breath. I don't know if you can actually pull this off, but you may be able to rebuild every city in the State of West Virginia...

Now let me tell you this: there's always got to be somebody who's a naysayer that's out there in the wilderness and is going to throw a rock or whatever. Now, listen to me. A long time ago, my grandfather, that I loved very dearly—he was 88 years old. He wanted to go squirrel-huntin' ... I would drive and pick him up, and we'd hunt til dark and everything. Then, on the way back, we were hungry. So I stopped at Kroger's. I bought him two bags of food. I bought everything. Anything you could possibly want to eat as far as a sandwich or stuff for breakfast, sweet rolls, orange juice, and all that kind of stuff. And I put it in the back seat where he was sitting. And he started goin' through the bags. ... And he looked right at me, and said, 'Could you not have bought a man a damned banana?'

Well that's exactly what I would say to you. If you can find something wrong with this, you're looking for a banana. That's all there is to this...

I would say to all of y'all, who may be doubters, don't get on the wrong side of it, because really and truly, it's a'comin', it's a'comin'.