

AML and You

How reauthorization of the Abandoned Mine Lands Fund might impact watershed restoration

Changes to SMCRA

- 10% reduction in reclamation fees starting 2008; 20% reduction in 2013
- Requires payment of unappropriated balance
- Distribution of monies no longer tied to appropriation process
- Clean Streams program, Cooperative Agreements still subject to appropriation
- Increases historical production allocation
- Eliminates Rural Abandoned Mine Program (already virtually defunct)
- Increases amount transferred to UMWA retiree health benefit plan
- Eliminates cap on water supply projects
- Increases amount of state-shares that can be set aside for AMD abatement (30%, up from 10%)
- Eliminates “general welfare” as component of Priority 1 & 2. This term was often used to include AMD abatement. AMD is considered P3
- Reclassifies P3 lands and waters adjacent to P1 and P2 sites as P1 or P2
- Adopts re-mining incentives

www.easterncoal.org/B/AML.htm for more



Photo Credit: Friends of the Cheat, WV

What's at stake?

Reauthorization of the AML fund is a huge victory for Coal Country. However, over 9,500 miles of Acid Mine Drainage (AMD)-impaired streams remain in our region. That's more than driving from DC to Anchorage and back! Reauthorization increases mining states' options. However, within the new rules, it's up to individual states to decide what is best for their citizens. AMD-abatement may or may not be a priority. For example, states are not required to increase set-aside funds to 30% (see side-bar), nor do they have to plan for long term operations and maintenance of treatment systems.

What can watershed groups do?

If you think AMD is a problem in your watershed, there are several things you can do to advance watershed restoration. First, figure out the extent of the problem. How many stream miles are impaired? What are the sources of impairment? Where might a treatment system have the most benefit? Have sound and well-managed data.

Next, develop a working relationship with your state mining office. Offer your assistance and ask what solutions are possible. Explain how increased set-aside funding might help your watershed. If you have had success in leveraging funds for watershed restoration projects, describe that success story. Ask questions and be patient.

Finally, talk to watershed groups in other states to see how watershed restoration is handled there. Get involved on a regional level and find out more about the Regional Roundtable.

EASTERN COAL REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE

119 S. Price Street
Suite 206

Kingwood, WV 26537

Phone: 304.329.8049

Web: www.easterncoal.org