

OSM'S ROLE IN BOND RELEASE FOR WESTERN COAL MINING¹

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Abstract: OSM has various roles in bond release. As the regulatory authority for coal mining under the Washington Federal Program and the Federal Program for Indian Lands, OSM experiences many challenges with bond release. With oversight evaluation of SMCRA regulatory programs in the various states, OSM has responsibilities ensuring effective regulatory programs and responsibilities pertaining to bond release of federal lands (cooperative agreements). OSM also provides technical assistance and training to state regulatory programs and funds research. The presentation will show some of the challenges with bond release and show an example of OSM technical assistance provided to a state regulatory authority (Wyoming Land Quality Division GIS/GPS Utilization for Bond Release Pilot Project with Powder River Coal Company). The potential for OSM rulemaking to improve the timeliness with which permittees apply for bond release may be mentioned which should generate “why?” questions and lively discussion.

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