

Reclamation of Abandoned Mine Lands in Conjunction with Economic and Community Development and Reuse Goals – Implementation of the 2016 AML Pilot Program in Pennsylvania¹

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Abstract: The Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Pilot Program, authorized by Congress under the Consolidated Appropriations Act (signed by President Obama on December 18, 2015), provided \$30 million of US Treasury Funds to Pennsylvania's (PA) AML Program for federal fiscal year FY2016. Language contained in the authorizing bill specifies that the funding be used "for the reclamation of abandoned mine lands in conjunction with economic and community development and reuse goals. State AML programs, in consultation with economic and community development authorities, shall develop a list of eligible AML projects in Appalachian counties that have a nexus to economic and community development, and select qualifying AML projects that have the potential to create long-term economic benefits." Since this is a pilot program, PA selected fourteen AML sites encompassing a wide variety of project types with a variety of possible economic or community development benefits and partners. PA allocated nearly all the AML Pilot Program funds for the construction of Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) Title IV eligible AML and AMD problems. The project partners are responsible to fund and complete non-AML economic revitalization or community development aspects of the projects. PA's 2016 AML Pilot Grant was approved on June 1, 2016 and had a three-year period of performance ending on May 31, 2019. The fourteen projects include: four AMD treatment projects; one underground mine fire project; two water supply replacement projects; one mine headframe/hoist preservation project, five surface mine reclamation projects; and one coal refuse piles removal project. The anticipated benefits include: several industrial development or business park opportunities; significant stream water quality improvement and restored fisheries; restored public lands; increased tourism; public trail development; mining heritage preservation; safety improvements and expansion of a regional airport; reforestation/restoration of American Chestnuts; expansion of a regional botanic garden; and new or upgraded potable water supplies for over six hundred homes and businesses. This presentation will discuss the completed and ongoing reclamation and/or development for each of the fourteen AML Pilot Projects as well as the success in achieving the benefits envisioned for each.

Additional Key Words: Abandoned Mine Lands (AML), Economic Development.

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