

# **Implementation of the 2016 AML Pilot Program in Pennsylvania: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned<sup>1</sup>**

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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 state 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."

The purpose of the AML Pilot Program is to both explore ways to return legacy abandoned coal sites to productive reuse and to inform Congress of the programmatic impacts of changes to the underlying federal law (the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA)) such as those included in the proposed RECLAIM Act which would accelerate distributions from the federal AML Trust Fund for similar economic revitalization and community development projects associated with the reclamation of AML sites.

Since this is a pilot program, PA selected 14 AML sites encompassing a wide variety of project types with a variety of possible economic or community development benefits and partners. PA is allocating all of the AML Pilot Program funds for the construction of SMCRA Title IV eligible AML and AMD problems. The project partners will then work to fund and complete non-AML economic development aspects of the projects. PA's 2016 AML Pilot Grant was approved on June 1, 2016 and has a three-year period of performance. This presentation will discuss the planned reclamation and anticipated benefits for each of the 14 AML Pilot Projects as well as the current status of each including project implementation successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

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

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