

land while at the same time we increase the production of coal. Thank you, Mr. President.

**THE PRESIDENT.** I don't think Senator Jackson and Lee Metcalf are here, but Jennings Randolph is here.

**SENATOR RANDOLPH.** Thank you, Mr. President.

It's my purpose to thank Lee Metcalf. I expect no man in the Senate or House labored more diligently, Mr. President, to bring this well-balanced legislation to final passage than Lee Metcalf. My tribute is to him and to you and to all those who labored. I think what has been done is in the best interests of the country.

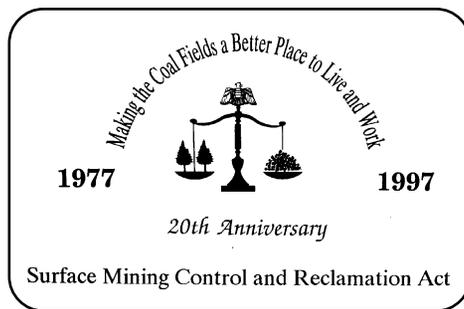
Thank you very much.

**THE PRESIDENT.** Well, I just want to shake hands with a few more people. We don't want the bill to get wet.



NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. at the signing ceremony in the Rose Garden at the White House.

As enacted, H.R. 2 is Public Law 95-87, approved August 3.



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## Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977

Remarks on Signing H.R. 2 Into Law.  
August 3, 1977



**THE PRESIDENT.** I think it's obvious from the composition of the group here this morning, that the American people have an intense interest in preserving the quality of our lives and the beauty of the land that God gave us.

Many years ago, because of my help and the help of many others, Georgia passed a very strong strip mining law. And I know that many here have worked for 6 years, sometimes much longer, to get a Federal strip mining law which would be fair and reasonable, which would enhance the legitimate and much needed production of coal and, also, assuage the fears that the beautiful areas where coal is produced were being destroyed.

This has been in many ways a disappointing effort. The Congress has passed legislation that would meet these needs. Unfortunately, in the past, the bills have been vetoed. But I found, as I campaigned around our Nation for 2 years, that there's an overwhelming, favorable sentiment among the people of our country that this legislation be passed.

Because of the complexity of the subject, you can see the volume that is required to express the Government position in law. And I believe that the good work of Chairman Jackson, Henry Jackson, and Mo Udall, many others behind me, is a testimony of persistence and enlightened leadership.

I think all of you know that Louise Dunlap has, in the last 6 years, organized and worked and been persistent in the face of diversity and disappointment.

I'm not completely satisfied with the legislation. I would prefer to have a stricter strip mining bill. I'm concerned with some of the features that had to be watered down during this session to get it passed, but I think that this provides us a basis on which we can make improvements on the bill in years to come.

I have some deep concerns about the provision concerning surface rights for properties in the West. And I

will be consulting with Senator Dale Bumpers and Cecil Andrus and others to see how we might pursue this question in the future.

But in general, I'm very proud of the good work that all of you have done, the fine and very courageous stands that the Members of the House and Senate have taken. And it's with a great deal of pleasure that I, as President of our beautiful country, sign into law the strip mining act, House Resolution 2, which will provide for protection of our country in the future.

And I want to express my thanks to all those who have done so much work long before I became President. It's a great pleasure for me to come in now and to take at least partial credit for the fine work that all of you around me have done for so long.

Perhaps the Senator would like to say a few words? Mo? Congratulations to you. Would you like to say a word?

**REPRESENTATIVE UDALL.** Well, thank you, Mr. President.

Someone once said that there's no limit to what can be done if it doesn't matter who gets the credit. And this is the work, as the President has said, of many people.

I see faces here from the coal fields in Kentucky and West Virginia, who were fighting a lonely battle in those company towns, 10 or 15 years ago, before I got interested, some of the Members of Congress got interested.

I see former Members of Congress, people like Patsy Mink, who co-chaired the subcommittee. Members of the Senate and the House, all kinds of good people who love this Nation and love its land. And as I said so many times when I was fighting with this good man here around the country, the people who don't respect and love the land don't respect themselves. And by getting this bill passed today, we are showing that this Nation loves its land and respects it and is going to protect the