



U.S. Office of Surface Mining

News Release



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For immediate release

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OSM Extends Public Comment Period To Discuss Stream Buffer Zone EIS

(Washington) The U.S. Office of Surface Mining (OSM) is extending the public comment period until September 1 on conducting an environmental impact study (EIS) on proposed rules governing excess spoil generation and disposal and stream buffer zones.

In June, OSM announced in the Federal Register its intent to prepare an EIS to analyze the effects of proposed revisions to its regulations. This week OSM is conducting five scoping meetings to discuss the scope of the proposed EIS, reasonable alternatives to conducting an EIS, and significant issues that should be examined in the course of preparing the study.

The meetings are scheduled as follows:

August 22, Knoxville, TN:

6-9 p.m. - Hilton Hotel, Sequoia Room, 501 W. Church Avenue, Southwest.

August 23, Hazard, KY:

6-9 p.m. - Hazard Community Technical College, One Community College Drive, First Federal Center, Room 123A.

August 24, Charleston, WV:

6-9 p.m. - Embassy Suites Hotel, Ballroom ABC, 300 Court Street.

August 25, Pittsburgh, PA:

6-9 p.m. - Best Western Parkway Center, 8th Floor in the Horizon Room, 875 Greentree Road, Greentree, PA.

These meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend and participate. The primary purpose of the meetings is to assist OSM in focusing the preparation of the upcoming EIS on those significant issues and reasonable alternatives related to the proposed action. Other issues to be discussed are impact topics, data needs, and national, state, and local concerns. The meetings will be informal and interactive and, where possible, seating will be around small tables to facilitate the exchange of ideas. The meetings are not intended to be adversarial or a debate on the merits of the proposed action.

OSM will keep detailed notes of the meeting and make these notes publicly available in the administrative record. Please note that there will be no court reporter present and oral testimony will not be taken and transcribed, but written comments and suggestions regarding the upcoming EIS will be accepted.

More detailed information concerning the proposed rule is available at the following internet address: www.osmre.gov/ocpropos.htm

Public comments should be sent to OSM by 4 pm on September 1, 2005, by mailing or hand carrying comments to: "EIS Scoping SBZ Rulemaking Comments" c/o OSM Appalachian Region, 3 Parkway Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15220, or sending comments via electronic mail to: SBZ-EIS@osmre.gov.

For Further Information Contact: David G. Hartos, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, U.S. Department of the Interior, 3 Parkway Center, Pittsburgh, PA 15220; Telephone: 412-937-2909. E-mail address: dhartos@osmre.gov. Any disabled individual who needs special accommodation to attend any of the public meetings is also encouraged to contact OSM to make the necessary arrangements.

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