



U.S. Office of Surface Mining

# News Release



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## **OSM Solicits Comments on Oversight of State and Tribal Coal Mining Programs** *Bureau Strives to Make Oversight Information Readily Available to Public*

(Washington) – To improve its oversight of state and tribal surface coal mining programs, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) today began to solicit input from stakeholders on where the bureau should focus its oversight resources and which aspects of state and tribal programs should be reviewed during the next evaluation period, which begins later this year.

Today's action is part of a larger commitment OSM made 15 months ago to maximize opportunities for public participation in the bureau's oversight of states and tribes with approved programs, and to make oversight-related information more available to the public. In November 2009, OSM announced a number of actions it was taking to increase the quality of its oversight of coal mining programs nationwide. One action was to improve transparency in the oversight process, and to increase public involvement in executing OSM's mission of protecting people and the environment while ensuring the Nation's energy supply. Soliciting input on state and tribal Performance Agreements/Evaluation Plans represents the first step in a bureau-wide, systematic approach to implementing this commitment.

Evaluation Year 2012 begins on July 1, 2011, and continues through June 30, 2012. Past review topics have included improved performance measures, prevention of offsite impacts, and better customer service.

OSM is asking the public to submit comments by March 30, 2011. A newly established OSM website allows interested parties to view [state- and tribe-specific oversight information](#) and provides instructions for submitting a suggestion, comment, or idea on a state or tribal program.

Further background on Performance Agreements can be found at [Directive REG-8, Oversight of State Regulatory Programs](#).

*The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement carries out the requirements of the [Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977](#) in cooperation with states and tribes. OSM's objectives are to ensure that coal mining activities are conducted in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, to ensure that the land is restored to beneficial use after mining, and to mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.*

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