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## **Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Announces Reduced Amount of Payments for Abandoned Mine Lands Due to Congressional Inaction**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U. S. Department of the Interior’s [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSM) today announced the availability of more than \$305 million in [Abandoned Mine Land \(AML\)](#) grants to states and tribes—90 percent of the more than \$339.4 million available for distribution—to eliminate environmental hazards caused by past coal mining. OSM administers the grants in accordance with the [Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 \(SMCRA\)](#), which requires OSM to make AML funding available to eligible states and tribes.

Twenty-eight coal-producing states and tribes receive annual AML grants, which are funded in part by a per-ton reclamation fee levied on all coal produced in the United States. Additional funding comes from the U.S. Treasury. The fund allows state and tribal AML programs to correct environmental damage from past mining, such as reclaiming unstable slopes, improving water quality by treating acid mine drainage, and restoring water supplies damaged by mining, among other things. States and tribes receive their allocations according to a congressionally mandated formula established by SMCRA. “The AML grant funds are important to states and tribes to eliminate dangerous mines and restore abandoned mine lands,” said [OSM Director Joe Pizarchik](#).

The annual announcement of the grants is traditionally done in December. The announcement was delayed by preparations for the potential sequester now scheduled to take place on March 1. The grant amounts announced today make available 90 percent of AML grant funding that each eligible state and tribe would normally receive, because ten percent of the funds are being held back pending the sequester. OSM has worked with states and tribes to provide as much assistance as possible in advance of the release of AML funding, and the bureau will continue to offer support to AML programs nationwide.

The hold back of ten percent in anticipation of the sequester will have impacts on communities across the Nation, the American people, and the environment. The reduction in AML funding means that about 50 abandoned mine land projects will not be reclaimed. This will impact an estimated 22,500 citizens who will continue to be exposed to mine-





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related hazards such as open mine shafts and portals, mine fires, dangerous highwalls, landslides, and mine subsidence. More than 1,800 acres of polluted or degraded mine lands will not be cleaned up, and over \$4.3 million will not be set aside for cleanup of mine-related water pollution. There are economic impacts as well; the reduction in funds means a reduction in contracts and jobs in the local community.

Since the enactment of SMCRA in 1977, OSM has provided more than \$7.6 billion to reclaim nearly 355,000 acres of hazardous high-priority abandoned mine sites, to provide health benefits to retired coal miners, and for other purposes. The [FY 2013 AML funding](#) available to the 28 states and tribes is as follows (the amounts that would have been available at a full 100% distribution are in parenthesis):

Alabama	\$8,173,522	(\$9,081,692)
Alaska	\$2,700,000	(\$3,000,000)
Arkansas	\$2,700,001	(\$3,000,000)
Colorado	\$7,779,170	(\$8,643,522)
Illinois	\$21,493,599	(\$23,881,776)
Indiana	\$14,335,720	(\$15,928,578)
Iowa	\$2,700,000	(\$3,000,000)
Kansas	\$2,700,001	(\$3,000,000)
Kentucky	\$40,237,689	(\$44,708,542)
Louisiana	\$380,516	(\$422,795)
Maryland	\$2,699,999	(\$3,000,000)
Mississippi	\$246,368	(\$273,742)
Missouri	\$2,700,001	(\$3,000,000)
Montana	\$11,739,628	(\$13,044,032)
New Mexico	\$4,819,272	(\$5,354,747)
North Dakota	\$3,521,731	(\$3,913,034)
Ohio	\$14,442,432	(\$16,047,146)
Oklahoma	\$2,700,001	(\$3,000,000)
Pennsylvania	\$58,547,563	(\$65,052,848)
Tennessee	\$2,700,000	(\$3,000,000)
Texas	\$4,744,120	(\$5,271,245)
Utah	\$4,334,660	(\$4,816,290)
Virginia	\$9,836,190	(\$10,929,100)
West Virginia	\$56,477,981	(\$62,753,312)
Wyoming	\$13,500,000	(\$15,000,000)
Crow Tribe	\$1,634,453	(\$1,816,059)
Hopi Tribe	\$1,186,860	(\$1,318,733)
Navajo Nation	\$6,469,908	(\$7,188,786)
Total distribution	\$305,501,385	(\$339,445,979)





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*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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