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## State of Mississippi Certifies It Has Completed Reclamation of Pre-1977 Abandoned Coal Mine Sites

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSMRE) announced today that Director Joseph Pizarchik has accepted the State of Mississippi’s application for certification that it has completed all reclamation work related to abandoned coal mine sites in the state.

With this certification, Mississippi no longer requires [Abandoned Coal Mine Reclamation](#) funding to reclaim abandoned coal mine sites, but will continue to receive Federal funding under the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program for other coal and non-coal related projects.

Congress created the AML fund in 1977 when it passed the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. Under the Act, states that have not completed reclamation of abandoned mine sites receive an allocation of funding generated by current coal mining to address hazards to human life and welfare, and threats to the environment. States that have completed AML-related reclamation continue to receive Treasury money as part of the AML distribution to fund other coal and non-coal related projects.

“I commend the people of Mississippi for completing a long and difficult road to eliminate these hazards from past mining,” said [OSMRE Director Joe Pizarchik](#). “As the first state to certify completion of this task in more than 22 years, it joins a select group. And, because Mississippi has completed its reclamation work, money that is critically needed elsewhere can address other hazardous abandoned coal mine related problems.”

To date, OSMRE’s Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation has collected more than \$10 billion in fees from present day coal production, and has distributed more than \$7.8 billion in grants to states and tribes to reclaim abandoned mine sites. Despite more than 30 years of continued reclamation activity, the latest AML inventory lists more than \$7 billion in high priority sites that threaten human health, welfare and safety.

By completing its reclamation of AML sites, Mississippi joins Louisiana, Montana, Texas and Wyoming as certified states. Three tribes, the Navajo Nation, the Hopi, and the Crow have also certified they have completed the required AML reclamation.

*OSMRE carries out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 in cooperation with states and tribes. OSMRE’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.*

