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President's FY2016 Budget for Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Calls for \$160.5 million in Discretionary Funding

President's Budget Includes \$1 Billion to Help Revitalize Coal Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – President Obama has proposed \$160.5 million in discretionary funding for the [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](http://www.osmre.gov) (OSMRE) in fiscal year FY 2016, an increase of \$10.4 million over this year's enacted level. The budget provides additional funding for States and Tribes to reclaim dangerous abandoned mine lands, invests in advanced science and technology for coal production, and strengthens the healthcare and pension plans that provide for the health and retirement security of coal miners and their families.

As part of an Administration initiative to revitalize coalfield communities, the budget also requests an accelerated disbursement of \$1 billion, \$200 million for 5 years, from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, to assist communities most severely impacted by dangerous abandoned coal mine lands and coal mine water pollution in a manner that facilitates economic revitalization on reclaimed lands and restored waterways. The President's Budget also includes proposals for other Federal agencies to contribute to a multiagency effort to invest in workers and jobs, address important legacy costs in coal country, and drive development of coal technology.

“The President’s Budget proposal strengthens areas that are in great and urgent need of immediate attention,” said [Director Joe Pizarchik](#). “This budget will help with our ongoing efforts to restore the environment and communities damaged by Abandoned Mine Lands, as well as the Federal government’s efforts to protect health and pension benefits for retired coal miners and their families. We must take care of American workers and American communities and this budget allows the government to help people help themselves. We look forward to working with congressional, State and tribal leadership to help constituents most in need.”

The budget includes several legislative proposals that increase funding available to States under the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Program and protect the health and retirement security of coal miners and their families. The President’s Budget would restore the AML fee collected on each ton of produced coal to the level in effect before Congress reduced the fee in 2006. The additional funding will provide more money to States to address the highest priority remaining AML sites, estimated at over \$4 billion.



Under the AML Program, which is funded by coal fees and not subject to annual appropriations, OSMRE will distribute an estimated \$385.3 million in mandatory funds in FY 2016 for States and Tribes to use to reclaim abandoned mines and coal mine drainage.

To help reduce the deficit, the Administration also proposes to stop mandatory payments from the Treasury to States and Tribes that have finished reclaiming abandoned coal mines in their jurisdictions, saving \$224 million over 10 years. The budget also proposes to replicate the success of the AML fund by creating a parallel program to reclaim abandoned hardrock (gold, silver, copper, etc.) mines. This would benefit dozens of States and Tribes.

The FY 2016 budget also includes \$4.4 million to advance technologies and practices specific to coal mining and reclamation. Specifically, the proposed budget would leverage tools like GeoMine, an internet geospatial data source to improve decision making and efficiency, and funding to advance more comprehensive ecosystem restoration, including reforestation and reclamation using native vegetation.

OSMRE grants to States and Tribes to regulate active coal mining within their jurisdictions are funded at \$65.5 million, enough to cover the Federal share, including \$2 million to support American Indian Tribes taking over primary responsibility for regulating coal mining on their lands. The budget furthers the President's goal of greater self-determination for American Indians.

"It is a priority of OSMRE and this Administration to work with the Navajo, Hopi, and Crow to obtain primacy," said Director Pizarchik. "I look forward to the day when these First Americans manage their own land and resources."

To expand the use of reforestation techniques in coal mine reclamation and provide opportunities for youth and community engagement, the request includes a program increase of \$1 million. Through the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative, OSMRE works with more than 500 different organizations to remove barriers to forest reclamation of mined lands. View OSMRE's proposed FY 2016 budget at <http://www.osmre.gov/resources/budget.shtm>

For instant updates on OSMRE, follow the bureau on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/OSMRE>, or visit www.osmre.gov. OSMRE carries out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in cooperation with States and Tribes. The bureau'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 pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.

