



# NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Christopher Holmes  
(202) 208-7941  
[cholmes@osmre.gov](mailto:cholmes@osmre.gov)

## **Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Announces Schedule of Public Hearings for the proposed Stream Protection Rule and Associated DEIS**

(Washington, D.C. – August 10, 2015) —The Department of the Interior’s [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement \(OSMRE\)](#) announced the schedule for six public hearings on the proposed [Stream Protection Rule](#) today.

The rule prevents and mitigates the dangerous impact to surface water and ground water from coal mining, by overhauling a three-decades-old set of regulations with new straight-forward reforms. The proposed rulemaking is guided by modern technology, and up-to-date science that will require coal companies to avoid mining practices that permanently pollute streams, destroy drinking water sources, increase flood risk and threaten forests. The rule also requires mining companies to restore streams, and to return mined areas to their previous form and uses, to better protect habitat for fish, wildlife and related environmental values.

“We encourage everyone to carefully read the proposed rule, which incorporates a combination of the latest science and technology, and a common-sense approach to protecting people and the environment while coal mining continues,” said Joe Pizarchik, Director of OSMRE. “The rule will protect about 6,500 miles of streams nationwide over a period of 20 years, preventing mining-related pollution that threatens communities and the environment.”

The proposed rule is accompanied by a [Draft Environmental Impact Statement \(DEIS\)](#), evaluating the environmental issues associated with the proposed rulemaking, including alternative regulatory approaches, and a Draft Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) evaluating the economic impacts. The statement assesses the environmental issues associated with the proposed rulemaking, including eight alternative regulatory approaches.

The bureau is also holding public hearings in six cities across the country to allow stakeholders an opportunity to give feedback on the rule. The schedule for the hearings is as follows:

### **Tuesday, September 1, 2015**

City: Denver, CO  
Location: Jefferson County Fairgrounds Event Hall  
15200 W. 6th Ave., Golden, CO 80401  
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. MST



## Thursday, September 3, 2015

City: Lexington, KY  
Location: Lexington Civic Center  
430 W Vine St., Lexington 40507  
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

## Thursday, September 10, 2015

City: St. Louis, MO  
Location: St. Charles Convention Center  
1 Convention Center Plaza, St. Charles 63303  
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

## Thursday, September 10, 2015

City: Pittsburgh, PA  
Location: Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh  
500 Mansfield Ave., Pittsburgh 15205  
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

## Tuesday, September 15, 2015

City: Big Stone Gap, VA  
Location: Mountain Empire Community College  
3441 Mt. Empire Rd., Big Stone Gap 24219  
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

## Thursday, September 17, 2015

City: Charleston, WV  
Location: Charleston Civic Center  
200 Civic Center Dr., Charleston 25301  
Time: 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

OSMRE will provide opportunities for interested parties to deliver or write comments onsite at each public hearing. The bureau will also provide a platform for participants to speak with a court reporter who will transcribe their verbal comments for the written record.

Additionally, the public will be able to speak in a public hearing format. For those speaking in the public hearing format, comments will be limited to two minutes in order to allow as many people to speak as possible. For those who cannot, or do not wish to attend a public hearing, OSMRE is accepting written comments through the U.S. Mail, hand-delivered and couriered comments to OSMRE headquarters in Washington, D.C., and electronically through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). OSMRE must receive all comments no later than September 25, 2015.

*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.*

