



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **President's FY2017 Budget for Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Calls for \$157.9 million in Discretionary Funding** *President's Budget Includes \$1 Billion to Help Revitalize Coal Communities*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – President Obama's budget request for the [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSMRE) in fiscal year (FY) 2017 provides funding for states and tribes to [reclaim dangerous abandoned mine lands](#); invests in technical assistance and advanced science and technology for coal production; and strengthens the healthcare and pension plans that provide security to coal miners and their families who were abandoned by the coal industry.

“Without our coal miners’ hard labor and dedication, our nation would not have benefited from the generation of economical and plentiful power necessary to lift the United States to the pinnacle of the world’s economies,” said [OSMRE Director Joe Pizarchik](#). “It is for that reason that we must protect and ensure the healthcare and retirement benefits of those miners and their families. The federal government will not abandon them. Without taking this action, we fail to fulfill our moral obligations to our people.”

### **Investing in Coal Communities**

As part of the Administration’s Power + initiative to revitalize coalfield communities, the budget proposes an accelerated disbursement of \$200 million annually for 5 years, for a total of \$1 billion from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, to assist communities most severely impacted by dangerous abandoned coal mine lands and coal mine water pollution. The goal is to facilitate economic revitalization on reclaimed lands and restored waterways.

### **Restoring AML Funding**

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 seeks to restore the AML fee collected on each ton of produced coal -- at 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 AML sites, estimated at more than \$6 billion.

The AML Program is funded by coal fees and not subject to annual appropriations. OSMRE will distribute an estimated \$374.3 million in mandatory funds in FY 2017 for states and tribes to reclaim abandoned mines and address acid mine drainage.

The Administration also proposes to stop mandatory payments from the United States



Treasury to states and tribes that have finished reclaiming abandoned coal mines in their jurisdictions, to help reduce the deficit. This change will save \$520 million over 10 years. The budget also intends to benefit dozens of states and tribes by creating a parallel program to reclaim abandoned hardrock (gold, silver, copper, etc.) mines.

### **Building Technical Expertise**

The FY 2017 budget also includes \$8.75 million to increase technical assistance to states, tribes and OSMRE programs to utilize interactive web-based digital tools like [GeoMine](#), and to fund technical studies that address more comprehensive ecosystem restoration, including reforestation and reclamation for the protection of threatened and endangered bat species.

### **Supporting Implementation of [Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act](#)**

The budget includes \$65.5 million for OSMRE grants to states and tribes to regulate active coal mining within their jurisdictional authorities. This will cover the federal share and support American Indian tribes taking over primary responsibility for regulating coal mining on their lands.

### **Engaging Youth**

The budget request includes a program increase of \$1 million to expand the use of reforestation techniques in coal mine reclamation projects and provide opportunities for youth and community engagement. Through the [Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative](#), OSMRE works with more than 500 organizations to remove barriers to forest reclamation of mined lands.

The President FY17 budget request of \$13.4 billion for the Department of the Interior reflects his commitment to meeting Federal trust responsibilities to Native Americans, conserve vital national landscapes across the Nation, support the next century of our National Park Service, and allow for responsibly managing energy development on public lands and offshore areas. The Budget in Brief is online: [www.doi.gov/budget](http://www.doi.gov/budget) and [www.doi.gov/budget/2017/Hilites/toc.html](http://www.doi.gov/budget/2017/Hilites/toc.html).

[View OSMRE's proposed FY 2017 budget here.](#)

*For instant updates on OSMRE, follow the bureau on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/OSMRE>, or visit [www.osmre.gov](http://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.*

