



NEWS RELEASE

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OSMRE Releases Final Documents on Tennessee's Petition for Lands Unsuitable for Mining

Final EIS identifies preferred alternative; Record of Decision will come at least 30 days after documents' formal publication

WASHINGTON, D.C. – [The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](http://www.osmre.gov) (OSMRE) is announcing the availability of final documents related to the State of Tennessee's petition to designate portions of the state's mountain ridges as Lands Unsuitable for Mining (LUM).

The bureau is making the final Petition Evaluation Document (PED) and Environmental Impact Statement (PED/EIS) for the Tennessee LUM designation available to the public at <http://www.osmre.gov/programs/rcm/TNLUM.shtm>. A final Record of Decision will be issued on the petition at least thirty days after the documents are published in the *Federal Register* in the coming days.

In September 2010, the State asked OSMRE to designate an area of approximately 67,000 acres as unsuitable for mining. The area includes approximately 505 miles of mountain ridgelines lying within the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area located in portions of Anderson, Campbell, Morgan and Scott counties.

In its petition, the State said allowing mining to continue would be incompatible with existing local and state plans, and that such mining would also affect fragile or historic lands that would result in significant damage to cultural, scientific, aesthetic values or natural systems.

Six possible alternatives were evaluated, including a "no-action" alternative that would deny the petition. OSMRE also solicited public input, held four public meetings and accepted written comments during the public comment period.

Based on those comments and the subsequent evaluation, Alternative 4 was identified as the preferred alternative. If selected, this alternative sets aside 76,000 acres in an expanded corridor of ridgelines independently identified by OSMRE as unsuitable for new surface coal mining operations. In the preferred alternative, OSMRE may still permit remining on a case-by-case basis if the remining complies with current regulations and is consistent with the reasons for any unsuitability designation. OSMRE will provide further guidance and explanation about how it would evaluate remining proposals for consistency with an



unsuitability designation in the Record of Decision for any such designation.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (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. For instant updates on OSMRE, follow the bureau's Twitter feed [@OSMRE](#).

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