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Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Seeks Public Comment on a Petition Regarding Self-Bonding for Coal Mines

Washington, DC – The [Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSMRE) today announced it will solicit public comments on a citizens’ petition that asks OSMRE to amend its regulations on financial assurances, specifically to prevent coal companies with a history of financial insolvency, and their subsidiaries, from using “self-bonding” as a means to ensure disturbed lands are restored after surface mining operations are completed. Under Federal law, OSMRE is required to consider the petition.

“This is an opportunity for all citizens to share their views on the petition we received,” said [OSMRE Director Joe Pizarchik](#), “and if it is determined that there is reason to begin a rulemaking, we are also asking what regulatory changes should be made. I urge everyone to read the petition, and then submit their comments.”

The bureau is asking the public to examine the petition submitted by WildEarth Guardians. An OSMRE team reviewed the petition and determined that it contained sufficient reason to ask for public comment on a potential change to its current regulations.

OSMRE is requesting states and tribes, stakeholders and the public to comment on the merits of the petition, the regulatory changes it suggests, and whether other changes, beyond what the petitioners have proposed, should be made. The bureau also requests an explanation of what those changes should be and why they should be made.

The [Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act](#) defines three major types of bonds to ensure reclamation is carried out: corporate surety bonds; collateral bonds (such as cash or certificates of deposit); or self-bonds, which are legally binding corporate promises without separate surety or collateral, available only to permittees who meet certain financial tests.

The *Federal Register* is scheduled to publish the petition on May 20. Interested parties will have 30 days to comment. All comments are due to OSMRE no later than June 20, 2016. To read the electronic version of the petition and provide comments, please visit www.regulations.gov and search for [Docket ID: OSM-2016-0006](#).

For U.S. Mail or hand/courier delivery, please address comments to Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Room 252 SIB, 1951 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20240, Attn: Docket ID OSM-2016-0006.

