



Ohio Revised Code

Section 1513.16 Performance standards.

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Legislation: House Bill 33

(A) Any permit issued under this chapter to conduct coal mining operations shall require that the operations meet all applicable performance standards of this chapter and such other requirements as the chief of the division of mineral resources management shall adopt by rule. General performance standards shall apply to all coal mining and reclamation operations and shall require the operator at a minimum to do all of the following:

(1) Conduct coal mining operations so as to maximize the utilization and conservation of the solid fuel resource being recovered so that re-affecting the land in the future through coal mining can be minimized;

(2) Restore the land affected to a condition capable of supporting the uses that it was capable of supporting prior to any mining, or higher or better uses of which there is reasonable likelihood, so long as the uses do not present any actual or probable hazard to public health or safety or pose any actual or probable threat of diminution or pollution of the waters of the state, and the permit applicants' declared proposed land uses following reclamation are not considered to be impractical or unreasonable, to be inconsistent with applicable land use policies and plans, to involve unreasonable delay in implementation, or to violate federal, state, or local law;

(3) Except as provided in division (B) of this section, with respect to all coal mining operations, backfill, compact where advisable to ensure stability or to prevent leaching of toxic materials, and grade in order to restore the approximate original contour of the land with all highwalls, spoil piles, and depressions eliminated unless small depressions are needed in order to retain moisture to assist revegetation or as otherwise authorized pursuant to this chapter, provided that if the operator demonstrates that due to volumetric expansion the amount of overburden and the spoil and waste materials removed in the course of the mining operation are more than sufficient to restore the approximate original contour, the operator shall backfill, grade, and compact the excess overburden and other spoil and waste materials to attain the lowest grade, but not more than the angle of repose, and to cover all acid-forming and other toxic materials in order to achieve an ecologically sound land



use compatible with the surrounding region in accordance with the approved mining plan. The overburden or spoil shall be shaped and graded in such a way as to prevent slides, erosion, and water pollution and shall be revegetated in accordance with this chapter.

(4) Stabilize and protect all surface areas, including spoil piles affected by the coal mining and reclamation operation, to control erosion and attendant air and water pollution effectively;

(5) Remove the topsoil from the land in a separate layer, replace it on the backfill area, or, if not utilized immediately, segregate it in a separate pile from the spoil, and when the topsoil is not replaced on a backfill area within a time short enough to avoid deterioration of the topsoil, maintain a successful cover by quick-growing plants or other means thereafter so that the topsoil is preserved from wind and water erosion, remains free of any contamination by acid or other toxic material, and is in a usable condition for sustaining vegetation when restored during reclamation. If the topsoil is of insufficient quantity or of poor quality for sustaining vegetation or if other strata can be shown to be more suitable for vegetation requirements, the operator shall remove, segregate, and preserve in a like manner such other strata as are best able to support vegetation.

(6) Restore the topsoil or the best available subsoil that is best able to support vegetation;

(7) For all prime farmlands as identified in division (B)(1)(p) of section 1513.07 of the Revised Code to be mined and reclaimed, perform soil removal, storage, replacement, and reconstruction in accordance with specifications established by the secretary of the United States department of agriculture under the "Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977," 91 Stat. 445, 30 U.S.C.A. 1201. The operator, at a minimum, shall be required to do all of the following:

(a) Segregate the A horizon of the natural soil, except where it can be shown that other available soil materials will create a final soil having a greater productive capacity, and, if not utilized immediately, stockpile this material separately from the spoil and provide needed protection from wind and water erosion or contamination by acid or other toxic material;

(b) Segregate the B horizon of the natural soil, or underlying C horizons or other strata, or a combination of such horizons or other strata that are shown to be both texturally and chemically suitable for plant growth and that can be shown to be equally or more favorable for plant growth than



the B horizon, in sufficient quantities to create in the regraded final soil a root zone of comparable depth and quality to that which existed in the natural soil, and, if not utilized immediately, stockpile this material separately from the spoil and provide needed protection from wind and water erosion or contamination by acid or other toxic material;

(c) Replace and regrade the root zone material described in division (A)(7)(b) of this section with proper compaction and uniform depth over the regraded spoil material;

(d) Redistribute and grade in a uniform manner the surface soil horizon described in division (A)(7)(a) of this section.

(8) Create, if authorized in the approved mining and reclamation plan and permit, permanent impoundments of water on mining sites as part of reclamation activities only when it is adequately demonstrated by the operator that all of the following conditions will be met:

(a) The size of the impoundment is adequate for its intended purposes.

(b) The impoundment dam construction will be so designed as to achieve necessary stability with an adequate margin of safety compatible with that of structures constructed under the "Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act," 68 Stat. 666 (1954), 16 U.S.C. 1001, as amended.

(c) The quality of impounded water will be suitable on a permanent basis for its intended use and discharges from the impoundment will not degrade the water quality below water quality standards established pursuant to applicable federal and state law in the receiving stream.

(d) The level of water will be reasonably stable.

(e) Final grading will provide adequate safety and access for proposed water users.

(f) The water impoundments will not result in the diminution of the quality or quantity of water utilized by adjacent or surrounding landowners for agricultural, industrial, recreational, or domestic uses.



(9) Conduct any augering operation associated with strip mining in a manner to maximize recoverability of mineral reserves remaining after the operation and reclamation are complete and seal all auger holes with an impervious and noncombustible material in order to prevent drainage, except where the chief determines that the resulting impoundment of water in such auger holes may create a hazard to the environment or the public health or safety. The chief may prohibit augering if necessary to maximize the utilization, recoverability, or conservation of the solid fuel resources or to protect against adverse water quality impacts.

(10) Minimize the disturbances to the prevailing hydrologic balance at the mine site and in associated offsite areas and to the quality and quantity of water in surface and ground water systems both during and after coal mining operations and during reclamation by doing all of the following:

(a) Avoiding acid or other toxic mine drainage by such measures as, but not limited to:

(i) Preventing or removing water from contact with toxic producing deposits;

(ii) Treating drainage to reduce toxic content that adversely affects downstream water upon being released to water courses in accordance with rules adopted by the chief in accordance with section 1513.02 of the Revised Code;

(iii) Casing, sealing, or otherwise managing boreholes, shafts, and wells, and keeping acid or other toxic drainage from entering ground and surface waters.

(b)(i) Conducting coal mining operations so as to prevent, to the extent possible using the best technology currently available, additional contributions of suspended solids to streamflow or runoff outside the permit area, but in no event shall contributions be in excess of requirements set by applicable state or federal laws;

(ii) Constructing any siltation structures pursuant to division (A)(10)(b)(i) of this section prior to commencement of coal mining operations. The structures shall be certified by persons approved by the chief to be constructed as designed and as approved in the reclamation plan.

(c) Cleaning out and removing temporary or large settling ponds or other siltation structures from



drainways after disturbed areas are revegetated and stabilized, and depositing the silt and debris at a site and in a manner approved by the chief;

(d) Restoring recharge capacity of the mined area to approximate premining conditions;

(e) Avoiding channel deepening or enlargement in operations requiring the discharge of water from mines;

(f) Such other actions as the chief may prescribe.

(11) With respect to surface disposal of mine wastes, tailings, coal processing wastes, and other wastes in areas other than the mine working areas or excavations, stabilize all waste piles in designated areas through construction in compacted layers, including the use of noncombustible and impervious materials if necessary, and ensure that the final contour of the waste pile will be compatible with natural surroundings and that the site can and will be stabilized and revegetated according to this chapter;

(12) Refrain from coal mining within five hundred feet of active and abandoned underground mines in order to prevent breakthroughs and to protect the health or safety of miners. The chief shall permit an operator to mine near, through, or partially through an abandoned underground mine or closer than five hundred feet to an active underground mine if both of the following conditions are met:

(a) The nature, timing, and sequencing of the approximate coincidence of specific strip mine activities with specific underground mine activities are approved by the chief.

(b) The operations will result in improved resource recovery, abatement of water pollution, or elimination of hazards to the health and safety of the public.

(13) Design, locate, construct, operate, maintain, enlarge, modify, and remove or abandon, in accordance with the standards and criteria developed pursuant to rules adopted by the chief, all existing and new coal mine waste piles consisting of mine wastes, tailings, coal processing wastes, or other liquid and solid wastes, and used either temporarily or permanently as dams or embankments;



(14) Ensure that all debris, acid-forming materials, toxic materials, or materials constituting a fire hazard are treated or buried and compacted or otherwise disposed of in a manner designed to prevent contamination of ground or surface waters and that contingency plans are developed to prevent sustained combustion;

(15) Ensure that all reclamation efforts proceed in an environmentally sound manner and as contemporaneously as practicable with the coal mining operations, except that where the applicant proposes to combine strip mining operations with underground mining operations to ensure maximum practical recovery of the mineral resources, the chief may grant a variance for specific areas within the reclamation plan from the requirement that reclamation efforts proceed as contemporaneously as practicable to permit underground mining operations prior to reclamation if:

(a) The chief finds in writing that:

(i) The applicant has presented, as part of the permit application, specific, feasible plans for the proposed underground mining operations.

(ii) The proposed underground mining operations are necessary or desirable to ensure maximum practical recovery of the mineral resource and will avoid multiple disturbance of the surface.

(iii) The applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated that the plan for the underground mining operations conforms to requirements for underground mining in this state and that permits necessary for the underground mining operations have been issued by the appropriate authority.

(iv) The areas proposed for the variance have been shown by the applicant to be necessary for the implementing of the proposed underground mining operations.

(v) No substantial adverse environmental damage, either on-site or off-site, will result from the delay in completion of reclamation as required by this chapter.

(vi) Provisions for the off-site storage of spoil will comply with division (A)(21) of this section.

(b) The chief has adopted specific rules to govern the granting of such variances in accordance with



this division and has imposed such additional requirements as the chief considers necessary.

(c) Variances granted under this division shall be reviewed by the chief not more than three years from the date of issuance of the permit.

(d) Liability under the performance security filed by the applicant with the chief pursuant to section 1513.08 of the Revised Code shall be for the duration of the underground mining operations and until the requirements of this section and section 1513.08 of the Revised Code have been fully complied with.

(16) Ensure that the construction, maintenance, and postmining conditions of access roads into and across the site of operations will control or prevent erosion and siltation, pollution of water, and damage to fish or wildlife or their habitat, or to public or private property;

(17) Refrain from the construction of roads or other access ways up a stream bed or drainage channel or in such proximity to the channel as to seriously alter the normal flow of water;

(18) Establish, on the regraded areas and all other lands affected, a diverse, effective, and permanent vegetative cover of the same seasonal variety native to the area of land to be affected and capable of self-regeneration and plant succession at least equal in extent of cover to the natural vegetation of the area, except that introduced species may be used in the revegetation process where desirable and necessary to achieve the approved postmining land use plan;

(19)(a) Assume the responsibility for successful revegetation, as required by division (A)(18) of this section, for a period of five full years after the last year of augmented seeding, fertilizing, irrigation, or other work in order to ensure compliance with that division, except that when the chief approves a long-term intensive agricultural postmining land use, the applicable five-year period of responsibility for revegetation shall commence at the date of initial planting for that long-term intensive agricultural postmining land use, and except that when the chief issues a written finding approving a long-term intensive agricultural postmining land use as part of the mining and reclamation plan, the chief may grant an exception to division (A)(18) of this section;

(b) On lands eligible for re-mining, assume the responsibility for successful revegetation, as required



by division (A)(18) of this section, for a period of two full years after the last year of augmented seeding, fertilizing, irrigation, or other work in order to ensure compliance with that division.

(20) Protect off-site areas from slides or damage occurring during the coal mining and reclamation operations and not deposit spoil material or locate any part of the operations or waste accumulations outside the permit area;

(21) Place all excess spoil material resulting from coal mining and reclamation operations in such a manner that all of the following apply:

(a) Spoil is transported and placed in a controlled manner in position for concurrent compaction and in such a way as to ensure mass stability and to prevent mass movement.

(b) The areas of disposal are within the permit areas for which performance security has been provided. All organic matter shall be removed immediately prior to spoil placement except in the zoned concept method.

(c) Appropriate surface and internal drainage systems and diversion ditches are used so as to prevent spoil erosion and mass movement.

(d) The disposal area does not contain springs, natural watercourses, or wet weather seeps unless lateral drains are constructed from the wet areas to the main underdrains in such a manner that filtration of the water into the spoil pile will be prevented unless the zoned concept method is used.

(e) If placed on a slope, the spoil is placed upon the most moderate slope among those slopes upon which, in the judgment of the chief, the spoil could be placed in compliance with all the requirements of this chapter and is placed, where possible, upon, or above, a natural terrace, bench, or berm if that placement provides additional stability and prevents mass movement.

(f) Where the toe of the spoil rests on a downslope, a rock toe buttress of sufficient size to prevent mass movement is constructed.

(g) The final configuration is compatible with the natural drainage pattern and surroundings and



suitable for intended uses.

(h) Design of the spoil disposal area is certified by a qualified registered professional engineer in conformance with professional standards.

(i) All other provisions of this chapter are met.

(22) Meet such other criteria as are necessary to achieve reclamation in accordance with the purpose of this chapter, taking into consideration the physical, climatological, and other characteristics of the site;

(23) To the extent possible, using the best technology currently available, minimize disturbances and adverse impacts of the operation on fish, wildlife, and related environmental values, and achieve enhancement of such resources where practicable;

(24) Provide for an undisturbed natural barrier beginning at the elevation of the lowest coal seam to be mined and extending from the outslope for such distance as the chief shall determine to be retained in place as a barrier to slides and erosion;

(25) Restore on the permit area streams and wetlands affected by mining operations unless the chief approves restoration off the permit area without a permit required by section 1513.07 or 1513.074 of the Revised Code, instead of restoration on the permit area, of a stream or wetland or a portion of a stream or wetland, provided that the chief first makes all of the following written determinations:

(a) A hydrologic and engineering assessment of the affected lands, submitted by the operator, demonstrates that restoration on the permit area is not possible.

(b) The proposed mitigation plan under which mitigation activities described in division (A)(25)(c) of this section will be conducted is limited to a stream or wetland, or a portion of a stream or wetland, for which restoration on the permit area is not possible.

(c) Mitigation activities off the permit area, including mitigation banking and payment of in-lieu mitigation fees, will be performed pursuant to a permit issued under sections 401 and 404 of the



"Federal Water Pollution Control Act" as defined in section 6111.01 of the Revised Code or an isolated wetland permit issued under Chapter 6111. of the Revised Code or pursuant to a no-cost reclamation contract for the restoration of water resources affected by past mining activities pursuant to section 1513.37 of the Revised Code.

(d) The proposed mitigation plan and mitigation activities comply with the standards established in this section.

If the chief approves restoration off the permit area in accordance with this division, the operator shall complete all mitigation construction or other activities required by the mitigation plan.

Performance security for reclamation activities on the permit area shall be released pursuant to division (F) of this section, except that the release of the remaining portion of performance security under division (F)(3)(c) of this section shall not be approved prior to the construction of required mitigation activities off the permit area.

(B)(1) The chief may permit mining operations for the purposes set forth in division (B)(3) of this section.

(2) When an applicant meets the requirements of divisions (B)(3) and (4) of this section, a permit without regard to the requirement to restore to approximate original contour known as mountain top removal set forth in divisions (A)(3) or (C)(2) and (3) of this section may be granted for the mining of coal where the mining operation will remove an entire coal seam or seams running through the upper fraction of a mountain, ridge, or hill, except as provided in division (B)(4)(a) of this section, by removing all of the overburden and creating a level plateau or a gently rolling contour with no highwalls remaining, and capable of supporting postmining uses in accordance with this division.

(3) In cases where an industrial, commercial, agricultural, residential, or public facility use, including recreational facilities, is proposed for the postmining use of the affected land, the chief may grant a permit for a mining operation of the nature described in division (B)(2) of this section when all of the following apply:

(a) After consultation with the appropriate land use planning agencies, if any, the proposed



postmining land use is considered to constitute an equal or better economic or public use of the affected land, as compared with premining use.

(b) The applicant presents specific plans for the proposed postmining land use and appropriate assurances that the use will be all of the following:

(i) Compatible with adjacent land uses;

(ii) Obtainable according to data regarding expected need and market;

(iii) Assured of investment in necessary public facilities;

(iv) Supported by commitments from public agencies where appropriate;

(v) Practicable with respect to private financial capability for completion of the proposed use;

(vi) Planned pursuant to a schedule attached to the reclamation plan so as to integrate the mining operation and reclamation with the postmining land use;

(vii) Designed by a registered engineer in conformity with professional standards established to ensure the stability, drainage, and configuration necessary for the intended use of the site.

(c) The proposed use is consistent with adjacent land uses and existing state and local land use plans and programs.

(d) The chief provides the governing body of the unit of general-purpose local government in which the land is located, and any state or federal agency that the chief, in the chief's discretion, determines to have an interest in the proposed use, an opportunity of not more than sixty days to review and comment on the proposed use.

(e) All other requirements of this chapter will be met.

(4) In granting a permit pursuant to this division, the chief shall require that each of the following is



met:

- (a) The toe of the lowest coal seam and the overburden associated with it are retained in place as a barrier to slides and erosion.
 - (b) The reclaimed area is stable.
 - (c) The resulting plateau or rolling contour drains inward from the out slopes except at specified points.
 - (d) No damage will be done to natural watercourses.
 - (e) Spoil will be placed on the mountaintop bench as is necessary to achieve the planned postmining land use, except that all excess spoil material not retained on the mountaintop bench shall be placed in accordance with division (A)(21) of this section.
 - (f) Stability of the spoil retained on the mountaintop bench is ensured and the other requirements of this chapter are met.
- (5) The chief shall adopt specific rules to govern the granting of permits in accordance with divisions (B)(1) to (4) of this section and may impose such additional requirements as the chief considers necessary.
- (6) All permits granted under divisions (B)(1) to (4) of this section shall be reviewed not more than three years from the date of issuance of the permit unless the applicant affirmatively demonstrates that the proposed development is proceeding in accordance with the terms of the approved schedule and reclamation plan.
- (C) All of the following performance standards apply to steep-slope coal mining and are in addition to those general performance standards required by this section, except that this division does not apply to those situations in which an operator is mining on flat or gently rolling terrain on which an occasional steep slope is encountered through which the mining operation is to proceed, leaving a plain or predominantly flat area, or where an operator is in compliance with division (B) of this



section:

(1) The operator shall ensure that when performing coal mining on steep slopes, no debris, abandoned or disabled equipment, spoil material, or waste mineral matter is placed on the downslope below the bench or mining cut. Spoil material in excess of that required for the reconstruction of the approximate original contour under division (A)(3) or (C)(2) of this section shall be permanently stored pursuant to division (A)(21) of this section.

(2) The operator shall complete backfilling with spoil material to cover completely the highwall and return the site to the approximate original contour, which material will maintain stability following mining and reclamation.

(3) The operator shall not disturb land above the top of the highwall unless the chief finds that the disturbance will facilitate compliance with the environmental protection standards of this section, except that any such disturbance involving land above the highwall shall be limited to that amount of land necessary to facilitate compliance.

(D)(1) The chief may permit variances for the purposes set forth in division (D)(3) of this section, provided that the watershed control of the area is improved and that complete backfilling with spoil material shall be required to cover completely the highwall, which material will maintain stability following mining and reclamation.

(2) Where an applicant meets the requirements of divisions (D)(3) and (4) of this section, a variance from the requirement to restore to approximate original contour set forth in division (C)(2) of this section may be granted for the mining of coal when the owner of the surface knowingly requests in writing, as a part of the permit application, that such a variance be granted so as to render the land, after reclamation, suitable for an industrial, commercial, residential, or public use, including recreational facilities, in accordance with divisions (D)(3) and (4) of this section.

(3) A variance pursuant to division (D)(2) of this section may be granted if:

(a) After consultation with the appropriate land use planning agencies, if any, the potential use of the affected land is considered to constitute an equal or better economic or public use.



- (b) The postmining land condition is designed and certified by a registered professional engineer in conformity with professional standards established to ensure the stability, drainage, and configuration necessary for the intended use of the site.
- (c) After approval of the appropriate state environmental agencies, the watershed of the affected land is considered to be improved.
- (4) In granting a variance pursuant to division (D) of this section, the chief shall require that only such amount of spoil will be placed off the mine bench as is necessary to achieve the planned postmining land use, ensure stability of the spoil retained on the bench, and meet all other requirements of this chapter. All spoil placement off the mine bench shall comply with division (A)(21) of this section.
- (5) The chief shall adopt specific rules to govern the granting of variances under division (D) of this section and may impose such additional requirements as the chief considers necessary.
- (6) All variances granted under division (D) of this section shall be reviewed not more than three years from the date of issuance of the permit unless the permittee affirmatively demonstrates that the proposed development is proceeding in accordance with the terms of the reclamation plan.
- (E) The chief shall establish standards and criteria regulating the design, location, construction, operation, maintenance, enlargement, modification, removal, and abandonment of new and existing coal mine waste piles referred to in division (A)(13) of this section and division (A)(5) of section 1513.35 of the Revised Code. The standards and criteria shall conform to the standards and criteria used by the chief of the United States army corps of engineers to ensure that flood control structures are safe and effectively perform their intended function. In addition to engineering and other technical specifications, the standards and criteria developed pursuant to this division shall include provisions for review and approval of plans and specifications prior to construction, enlargement, modification, removal, or abandonment; performance of periodic inspections during construction; issuance of certificates of approval upon completion of construction; performance of periodic safety inspections; and issuance of notices for required remedial or maintenance work.



(F)(1) The permittee may file a request with the chief for release of a part of a performance security under division (F)(3) of this section. Within thirty days after any request for performance security release under this section has been filed with the chief, the operator shall submit a copy of an advertisement placed at least once a week for four successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the locality of the coal mining operation. The advertisement shall be considered part of any performance security release application and shall contain a notification of the precise location of the land affected, the number of acres, the permit number and the date approved, the amount of the performance security filed and the portion sought to be released, the type and appropriate dates of reclamation work performed, and a description of the results achieved as they relate to the operator's approved reclamation plan and, if applicable, the operator's pollution abatement plan. In addition, as part of any performance security release application, the applicant shall submit copies of the letters sent to adjoining property owners, local governmental bodies, planning agencies, and sewage and water treatment authorities or water companies in the locality in which the coal mining and reclamation activities took place, notifying them of the applicant's intention to seek release from the performance security.

(2) Upon receipt of a copy of the advertisement and request for release of a performance security under division (F)(3)(c) of this section, the chief, within thirty days, shall conduct an inspection and evaluation of the reclamation work involved. The evaluation shall consider, among other things, the degree of difficulty to complete any remaining reclamation, whether pollution of surface and subsurface water is occurring, the probability of continuation or future occurrence of the pollution, and the estimated cost of abating the pollution. The chief shall notify the permittee in writing of the decision to release or not to release all or part of the performance security within sixty days after the filing of the request if no public hearing is held pursuant to division (F)(6) of this section or, if there has been a public hearing held pursuant to division (F)(6) of this section, within thirty days thereafter.

(3) The chief may release the performance security if the reclamation covered by the performance security or portion thereof has been accomplished as required by this chapter and rules adopted under it according to the following schedule:

(a) When the operator completes the backfilling, regrading, and drainage control of an area for which performance security has been provided in accordance with the approved reclamation plan, and, if



the area covered by the performance security is one for which an authorization was made under division (E)(7) of section 1513.07 of the Revised Code, the operator has complied with the approved pollution abatement plan and all additional requirements established by the chief in rules adopted under section 1513.02 of the Revised Code governing coal mining and reclamation operations on pollution abatement areas, the chief shall grant a release of fifty per cent of the performance security for the applicable permit area.

(b) After resoiling and revegetation have been established on the regraded mined lands in accordance with the approved reclamation plan, the chief shall grant a release in an amount not exceeding thirty-five per cent of the original performance security for all or part of the affected area under the permit. When determining the amount of performance security to be released after successful revegetation has been established, the chief shall retain that amount of performance security for the revegetated area that would be sufficient for a third party to cover the cost of reestablishing revegetation for the period specified for operator responsibility in this section for reestablishing revegetation. No part of the performance security shall be released under this division so long as the lands to which the release would be applicable are contributing suspended solids to streamflow or runoff outside the permit area in excess of the requirements of this section or until soil productivity for prime farmlands has returned to equivalent levels of yield as nonmined land of the same soil type in the surrounding area under equivalent management practices as determined from the soil survey performed pursuant to section 1513.07 of the Revised Code. If the area covered by the performance security is one for which an authorization was made under division (E)(7) of section 1513.07 of the Revised Code, no part of the performance security shall be released under this division until the operator has complied with the approved pollution abatement plan and all additional requirements established by the chief in rules adopted under section 1513.02 of the Revised Code governing coal mining and reclamation operations on pollution abatement areas. Where a silt dam is to be retained as a permanent impoundment pursuant to division (A)(10) of this section, the portion of performance security may be released under this division so long as provisions for sound future maintenance by the operator or the landowner have been made with the chief.

(c) When the operator has completed successfully all coal mining and reclamation activities, including, if applicable, all additional requirements established in the pollution abatement plan approved under division (E)(7) of section 1513.07 of the Revised Code and all additional requirements established by the chief in rules adopted under section 1513.02 of the Revised Code



governing coal mining and reclamation operations on pollution abatement areas, the chief shall release all or any of the remaining portion of the performance security for all or part of the affected area under a permit, but not before the expiration of the period specified for operator responsibility in this section, except that the chief may adopt rules for a variance to the operator period of responsibility considering vegetation success and probability of continued growth and consent of the landowner, provided that no performance security shall be fully released until all reclamation requirements of this chapter are fully met.

(4) If the chief disapproves the application for release of the performance security or portion thereof, the chief shall notify the permittee, in writing, stating the reasons for disapproval and recommending corrective actions necessary to secure the release, and allowing the opportunity for a public adjudicatory hearing.

(5) When any application for total or partial performance security release is filed with the chief under this section, the chief shall notify the municipal corporation in which the coal mining operation is located by certified mail at least thirty days prior to the release of all or a portion of the performance security.

(6) A person with a valid legal interest that might be adversely affected by release of a performance security under this section or the responsible officer or head of any federal, state, or local government agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental, social, or economic impact involved in the operation or is authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards with respect to such operations may file written objections to the proposed release from the performance security with the chief within thirty days after the last publication of the notice required by division (F)(1) of this section. If written objections are filed and an informal conference is requested, the chief shall inform all interested parties of the time and place of the conference. The date, time, and location of the informal conference shall be advertised by the chief in a newspaper of general circulation in the locality of the coal mining operation proposed for performance security release for at least once a week for two consecutive weeks. The informal conference shall be held in the locality of the coal mining operation proposed for performance security release or in Franklin county, at the option of the objector, within thirty days after the request for the conference. An electronic record shall be made of the conference proceeding unless waived by all parties. The record shall be maintained and shall be accessible to the parties until final



release of the performance security at issue. In the event all parties requesting the informal conference stipulate agreement prior to the requested informal conference and withdraw their request, the informal conference need not be held.

(7) If an informal conference has been held pursuant to division (F)(6) of this section, the chief shall issue and furnish the applicant and persons who participated in the conference with the written decision regarding the release within sixty days after the conference. Within thirty days after notification of the final decision of the chief regarding the performance security release, the applicant or any person with an interest that is or may be adversely affected by the decision may appeal the decision to the reclamation commission pursuant to section 1513.13 of the Revised Code.

(8)(a) If the chief determines that a permittee is responsible for mine drainage that requires water treatment after reclamation is completed under the terms of the permit or that a permittee must provide an alternative water supply after reclamation is completed under the terms of the permit, the permittee shall provide alternative financial security in an amount determined by the chief prior to the release of the remaining portion of performance security under division (F)(3)(c) of this section. The alternative financial security shall be in an amount that is equal to or greater than the present value of the estimated cost over time to develop and implement mine drainage plans and provide water treatment or in an amount that is necessary to provide and maintain an alternative water supply, as applicable. The alternative financial security shall include a contract, trust, or other agreement or mechanism that is enforceable under law to provide long-term water treatment or a long-term alternative water supply, or both. The contract, trust, or other agreement or mechanism included with the alternative financial security may provide for the funding of the alternative financial security incrementally over a period of time, not to exceed five years, with reliance on guarantees or other collateral provided by the permittee and approved by the chief for the balance of the alternative financial security required until the alternative financial security has been fully funded by the permittee.

(b) The chief shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code that are necessary for the administration of division (F)(8)(a) of this section.

(c) If the chief determines that a permittee must provide alternative financial security under division (F)(8)(a) of this section and the performance security for the permit was provided under division



(C)(2) of section 1513.08 of the Revised Code, the permittee may fund the alternative financial security incrementally over a period of time, not to exceed five years, with reliance on the reclamation forfeiture fund created in section 1513.18 of the Revised Code for the balance of the alternative financial security required until the alternative financial security has been fully funded by the permittee. The permittee semiannually shall pay to the division of mineral resources management a fee that is equal to seven and one-half per cent of the average balance of the alternative financial security that is being provided by reliance on the reclamation forfeiture fund over the previous six months. All money received from the fee shall be credited to the reclamation forfeiture fund.

(9) Final release of the performance security in accordance with division (F)(3)(c) of this section terminates the jurisdiction of the chief under this chapter over the reclaimed site of a surface coal mining and reclamation operation or applicable portion of an operation. However, the chief shall reassert jurisdiction over such a site if the release was based on fraud, collusion, or misrepresentation of a material fact and the chief, in writing, demonstrates evidence of the fraud, collusion, or misrepresentation. Any person with an interest that is or may be adversely affected by the chief's determination may appeal the determination to the reclamation commission in accordance with section 1513.13 of the Revised Code.

(G) The chief shall adopt rules governing the criteria for forfeiture of performance security, the method of determining the forfeited amount, and the procedures to be followed in the event of forfeiture. Cash received as the result of such forfeiture is the property of the state.