



Ohio Revised Code

Section 1513.37 Abandoned mine reclamation fund.

Effective: December 19, 2016

Legislation: House Bill 471 - 131st General Assembly

(A) There is hereby created in the state treasury the abandoned mine reclamation fund, which shall be administered by the chief of the division of mineral resources management. The fund shall consist of grants from the secretary of the interior from the federal abandoned mine reclamation fund established by Title IV of the "Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977," 91 Stat. 445, 30 U.S.C.A. 1201, regulations adopted under it, and amendments to the act and regulations.

Expenditures from the abandoned mine reclamation fund shall be made by the chief for the following purposes:

(1) Reclamation and restoration of land and water resources adversely affected by past coal mining, including, but not limited to, reclamation and restoration of abandoned strip mine areas, abandoned coal processing areas, and abandoned coal refuse disposal areas; sealing and filling of abandoned deep mine entries and voids; planting of land adversely affected by past coal mining; prevention of erosion and sedimentation; prevention, abatement, treatment, and control of water pollution created by coal mine drainage, including restoration of streambeds and construction and operation of water treatment plants; prevention, abatement, and control of burning coal refuse disposal areas and burning coal in situ; and prevention, abatement, and control of coal mine subsidence;

(2) Acquisition and filling of voids and sealing of tunnels, shafts, and entryways of noncoal lands;

(3) Acquisition of land as provided for in this section;

(4) Administrative expenses incurred in accomplishing the purposes of this section;

(5) All other necessary expenses to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(B) Expenditures of moneys from the fund on land and water eligible pursuant to division (C) of this section shall reflect the following priorities in the order stated:



- (1) The protection of public health, safety, general welfare, and property from extreme danger of adverse effects of coal mining practices;
 - (2) The protection of public health, safety, and general welfare from adverse effects of coal mining practices;
 - (3) The restoration of land and water resources and the environment previously degraded by adverse effects of coal mining practices, including measures for the conservation and development of soil and water (excluding channelization), woodland, fish and wildlife, recreation resources, and agricultural productivity;
 - (4) Research and demonstration projects relating to the development of coal mining reclamation and water quality control program methods and techniques;
 - (5) The protection, repair, replacement, construction, or enhancement of public facilities such as utilities, roads, recreation facilities, and conservation facilities adversely affected by coal mining practices;
 - (6) The development of publicly owned land adversely affected by coal mining practices, including land acquired as provided in this section for recreation and historic purposes, conservation and reclamation purposes, and open space benefits.
- (C)(1) Lands and water eligible for reclamation or drainage abatement expenditures under this section are those that were mined for coal or were affected by such mining, wastebanks, coal processing, or other coal mining processes and that meet one of the following criteria:
- (a) Are lands that were abandoned or left in an inadequate reclamation status prior to August 3, 1977, and for which there is no continuing reclamation responsibility under state or federal laws;
 - (b) Are lands for which the chief finds that surface coal mining operations occurred at any time between August 4, 1977, and August 16, 1982, and that any moneys for reclamation or abatement that are available pursuant to a bond, performance security, or other form of financial guarantee or from any other source are not sufficient to provide for adequate reclamation or abatement at the site;



(c) Are lands for which the chief finds that surface coal mining operations occurred at any time between August 4, 1977, and November 5, 1990, that the surety of the mining operator became insolvent during that time, and that, as of November 5, 1990, any moneys immediately available from proceedings relating to that insolvency or from any financial guarantee or other source are not sufficient to provide for adequate reclamation or abatement at the site.

(2) In determining which sites to reclaim pursuant to divisions (C)(1)(b) and (c) of this section, the chief shall follow the priorities stated in divisions (B)(1) and (2) of this section and shall ensure that priority is given to those sites that are in the immediate vicinity of a residential area or that have an adverse economic impact on a local community.

(3) Surface coal mining operations on lands eligible for remining shall not affect the eligibility of those lands for reclamation and restoration under this section after the release of the bond, performance security, or other form of financial guarantee for any such operation as provided under division (F) of section 1513.16 of the Revised Code. If the bond, performance security, or other form of financial guarantee for a surface coal mining operation on lands eligible for remining is forfeited, moneys available under this section may be used if the amount of the bond, performance security, or other form of financial guarantee is not sufficient to provide for adequate reclamation or abatement, except that if conditions warrant, the chief immediately shall exercise the authority granted under division (L) of this section.

(D) The chief may submit to the secretary of the interior a state reclamation plan and annual projects to carry out the purposes of this section.

(1) The reclamation plan generally shall identify the areas to be reclaimed, the purposes for which the reclamation is proposed, the relationship of the lands to be reclaimed and the proposed reclamation to surrounding areas, the specific criteria for ranking and identifying projects to be funded, and the legal authority and programmatic capability to perform the work in accordance with this section.

(2) On an annual basis, the chief may submit to the secretary an application for support of the abandoned mine reclamation fund and implementation of specific reclamation projects. The annual



requests shall include such information as may be requested by the secretary.

(3) The costs for each proposed project under this section shall include actual construction costs, actual operation and maintenance costs of permanent facilities, planning and engineering costs, construction inspection costs, and other necessary administrative expenses.

(4) The chief may submit annual and other reports required by the secretary when funds are provided by the secretary under Title IV of the "Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977," 91 Stat. 445, 30 U.S.C.A. 1201, regulations adopted under it, and amendments to the act and regulations.

(E)(1) There is hereby created in the state treasury the acid mine drainage abatement and treatment fund, which shall be administered by the chief. The fund shall consist of grants from the secretary of the interior from the federal abandoned mine reclamation fund pursuant to section 402(g)(6) of Title IV of the "Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977," 91 Stat. 445, 30 U.S.C.A. 1201. All investment earnings of the fund shall be credited to the fund.

(2) The chief shall make expenditures from the fund, in consultation with the United States department of agriculture, soil conservation service, to implement acid mine drainage abatement and treatment plans approved by the secretary. The plans shall provide for the comprehensive abatement of the causes and treatment of the effects of acid mine drainage within qualified hydrologic units affected by coal mining practices and shall include at least all of the following:

(a) An identification of the qualified hydrologic unit. As used in division (E) of this section, "qualified hydrologic unit" means a hydrologic unit that meets all of the following criteria:

(i) The water quality in the unit has been significantly affected by acid mine drainage from coal mining practices in a manner that has an adverse impact on biological resources.

(ii) The unit contains lands and waters that meet the eligibility requirements established under division (C) of this section and any of the priorities established in divisions (B)(1) to (3) of this section.



(iii) The unit contains lands and waters that are proposed to be the subject of expenditures from the reclamation forfeiture fund created in section 1513.18 of the Revised Code or the unreclaimed lands fund created in section 1513.30 of the Revised Code.

(b) The extent to which acid mine drainage is affecting the water quality and biological resources within the hydrologic unit;

(c) An identification of the sources of acid mine drainage within the hydrologic unit;

(d) An identification of individual projects and the measures proposed to be undertaken to abate and treat the causes or effects of acid mine drainage within the hydrologic unit;

(e) The cost of undertaking the proposed abatement and treatment measures;

(f) An identification of existing and proposed sources of funding for those measures;

(g) An analysis of the cost-effectiveness and environmental benefits of abatement and treatment measures.

(3) The chief may make grants of moneys from the acid mine drainage abatement and treatment fund to watershed groups for conducting projects to accomplish the purposes of this section. A grant may be made in an amount equal to not more than fifty per cent of each of the following:

(a) Reasonable and necessary expenses for the collection and analysis of data sufficient to do either or both of the following:

(i) Identify a watershed as a qualified hydrologic unit;

(ii) Monitor the quality of water in a qualified hydrologic unit before, during, and at any time after completion of the project by the watershed group.

(b) Engineering design costs and construction costs involved in the project, provided that the project is conducted in a qualified hydrologic unit and the chief considers the project to be a priority.



A watershed group that wishes to obtain a grant under division (E)(3) of this section shall submit an application to the chief on forms provided by the division of mineral resources management, together with detailed estimates and timetables for accomplishing the stated goals of the project and any other information that the chief requires.

For the purposes of establishing priorities for awarding grants under division (E)(3) of this section, the chief shall consider each project's feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and environmental benefit, together with the availability of matching funding, including in-kind services, for the project.

The chief shall enter into a contract for funding with each applicant awarded a grant to ensure that the moneys granted are used for the purposes of this section and that the work that the project involves is done properly. The contract is not subject to division (B) of section 127.16 of the Revised Code. The final payment of grant moneys shall not be made until the chief inspects and approves the completed project.

The chief shall require each applicant awarded a grant under this section who conducts a project involving construction work to pay workers at the greater of their regular rate of pay, as established by contract, agreement, or prior custom or practice, or the average wage rate paid in this state for the same or similar work performed in the same or a similar locality by private companies doing similar work on similar projects.

As used in division (E)(3) of this section, "watershed group" means a charitable organization as defined in section 1716.01 of the Revised Code that has been established for the purpose of conducting reclamation of land and waters adversely affected by coal mining practices and specifically for conducting acid mine drainage abatement.

(F)(1) If the chief makes a finding of fact that land or water resources have been adversely affected by past coal mining practices; the adverse effects are at a stage where, in the public interest, action to restore, reclaim, abate, control, or prevent the adverse effects should be taken; the owners of the land or water resources where entry must be made to restore, reclaim, abate, control, or prevent the adverse effects of past coal mining practices are not known or are not readily available; or the owners will not give permission for the state, political subdivisions, or their agents, employees, or



contractors to enter upon the property to restore, reclaim, abate, control, or prevent the adverse effects of past coal mining practices; then, upon giving notice by mail to the owners, if known, or, if not known, by posting notice upon the premises and advertising once in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipal corporation or county in which the land lies, the chief or the chief's agents, employees, or contractors may enter upon the property adversely affected by past coal mining practices and any other property to have access to the property to do all things necessary or expedient to restore, reclaim, abate, control, or prevent the adverse effects. The entry shall be construed as an exercise of the police power for the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare and shall not be construed as an act of condemnation of property nor of trespass on it. The moneys expended for the work and the benefits accruing to any such premises so entered upon shall be chargeable against the land and shall mitigate or offset any claim in or any action brought by any owner of any interest in the premises for any alleged damages by virtue of the entry, but this provision is not intended to create new rights of action or eliminate existing immunities.

(2) The chief or the chief's authorized representatives may enter upon any property for the purpose of conducting studies or exploratory work to determine the existence of adverse effects of past coal mining practices and to determine the feasibility of restoration, reclamation, abatement, control, or prevention of such adverse effects. The entry shall be construed as an exercise of the police power for the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare and shall not be construed as an act of condemnation of property nor trespass on it.

(3) The chief may acquire any land by purchase, donation, or condemnation that is adversely affected by past coal mining practices if the chief determines that acquisition of the land is necessary to successful reclamation and that all of the following apply:

(a) The acquired land, after restoration, reclamation, abatement, control, or prevention of the adverse effects of past coal mining practices, will serve recreation and historic purposes, serve conservation and reclamation purposes, or provide open space benefits.

(b) Permanent facilities such as a treatment plant or a relocated stream channel will be constructed on the land for the restoration, reclamation, abatement, control, or prevention of the adverse effects of past coal mining practices.



(c) Acquisition of coal refuse disposal sites and all coal refuse thereon will serve the purposes of this section or public ownership is desirable to meet emergency situations and prevent recurrences of the adverse effects of past coal mining practices.

(4)(a) Title to all lands acquired pursuant to this section shall be in the name of the state. The price paid for land acquired under this section shall reflect the market value of the land as adversely affected by past coal mining practices.

(b) The chief may receive grants on a matching basis from the secretary of the interior for the purpose of carrying out this section.

(5)(a) Where land acquired pursuant to this section is considered to be suitable for industrial, commercial, residential, or recreational development, the chief may sell the land by public sale under a system of competitive bidding at not less than fair market value and under other requirements imposed by rule to ensure that the lands are put to proper use consistent with local and state land use plans, if any, as determined by the chief.

(b) The chief, when requested, and after appropriate public notice, shall hold a public meeting in the county, counties, or other appropriate political subdivisions of the state in which lands acquired pursuant to this section are located. The meetings shall be held at a time that shall afford local citizens and governments the maximum opportunity to participate in the decision concerning the use or disposition of the lands after restoration, reclamation, abatement, control, or prevention of the adverse effects of past coal mining practices.

(6) In addition to the authority to acquire land under division (F)(3) of this section, the chief may use money in the fund to acquire land by purchase, donation, or condemnation, and to reclaim and transfer acquired land to a political subdivision, or to any person, if the chief determines that it is an integral and necessary element of an economically feasible plan for the construction or rehabilitation of housing for persons disabled as the result of employment in the mines or work incidental to that employment, persons displaced by acquisition of land pursuant to this section, persons dislocated as the result of adverse effects of coal mining practices that constitute an emergency as provided in the "Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977," 91 Stat. 466, 30 U.S.C.A. 1240, or amendments to it, or persons dislocated as the result of natural disasters or catastrophic failures from



any cause. Such activities shall be accomplished under such terms and conditions as the chief requires, which may include transfers of land with or without monetary consideration, except that to the extent that the consideration is below the fair market value of the land transferred, no portion of the difference between the fair market value and the consideration shall accrue as a profit to those persons. No part of the funds provided under this section may be used to pay the actual construction costs of housing. The chief may carry out the purposes of division (F)(6) of this section directly or by making grants and commitments for grants and may advance money under such terms and conditions as the chief may require to any agency or instrumentality of the state or any public body or nonprofit organization designated by the chief.

(G)(1) Within six months after the completion of projects to restore, reclaim, abate, control, or prevent adverse effects of past coal mining practices on privately owned land, the chief shall itemize the moneys so expended and may file a statement of the expenditures in the office of the county recorder of the county in which the land lies, together with a notarized appraisal by an independent appraiser of the value of the land before the restoration, reclamation, abatement, control, or prevention of adverse effects of past coal mining practices if the moneys so expended result in a significant increase in property value. The statement shall constitute a lien upon the land as of the date of the expenditures of the moneys and shall have priority as a lien second only to the lien of real property taxes imposed upon the land. The lien shall not exceed the amount determined by the appraisal to be the increase in the fair market value of the land as a result of the restoration, reclamation, abatement, control, or prevention of the adverse effects of past coal mining practices. No lien shall be filed under division (G) of this section against the property of any person who owned the surface prior to May 2, 1977, and did not consent to, participate in, or exercise control over the mining operation that necessitated the reclamation performed.

(2) The landowner may petition, within sixty days after the filing of the lien, to determine the increase in the fair market value of the land as a result of the restoration, reclamation, abatement, control, or prevention of the adverse effects of past coal mining practices. The amount reported to be the increase in value of the premises shall constitute the amount of the lien and shall be recorded with the statement provided in this section. Any party aggrieved by the decision may appeal as provided by state law.

(3) The lien provided in division (G) of this section shall be recorded and indexed, under the name of



the state and the landowner, in the official records in the office of the county recorder of the county in which the land lies. The county recorder shall impose no charge for the recording or indexing of the lien. If the land is registered, the county recorder shall make a notation and enter a memorial of the lien upon the page of the register in which the last certificate of title to the land is registered, stating the name of the claimant, amount claimed, volume and page of the record where recorded, and exact time the memorial was entered.

(4) The lien shall continue in force so long as any portion of the amount of the lien remains unpaid. If the lien remains unpaid at the time of conveyance of the land on which the lien was placed, the conveyance may be set aside. Upon repayment in full of the moneys expended under this section, the chief promptly shall issue a certificate of release of the lien. Upon presentation of the certificate of release, the county recorder of the county in which the lien is recorded shall record the lien as having been discharged.

(5) A lien imposed under this section shall be foreclosed upon the substantial failure of a landowner to pay any portion of the amount of the lien. Before foreclosing any lien under this section, the chief shall make a written demand upon the landowner for payment. If the landowner does not pay the amount due within sixty days, the chief shall refer the matter to the attorney general, who shall institute a civil action to foreclose the lien.

(H)(1) The chief may fill voids, seal abandoned tunnels, shafts, and entryways, and reclaim surface impacts of underground or strip mines that the chief determines could endanger life and property, constitute a hazard to the public health and safety, or degrade the environment.

(2) In those instances where mine waste piles are being reworked for conservation purposes, the incremental costs of disposing of the wastes from those operations by filling voids and sealing tunnels may be eligible for funding, provided that the disposal of these wastes meets the purposes of this section.

(3) The chief may acquire by purchase, donation, easement, or otherwise such interest in land as the chief determines necessary to carry out division (H) of this section.

(I) The chief shall report annually to the secretary of the interior on operations under the fund and



include recommendations as to its future uses.

(J)(1) The chief may engage in any work and do all things necessary or expedient, including the adoption of rules, to implement and administer this section.

(2) The chief may engage in cooperative projects under this section with any agency of the United States, any other state, or their governmental agencies or with any state university or college as defined in section 3345.27 of the Revised Code. The cooperative projects are not subject to division (B) of section 127.16 of the Revised Code.

(3) The chief may request the attorney general to initiate in any court of competent jurisdiction an action in equity for an injunction to restrain any interference with the exercise of the right to enter or to conduct any work provided in this section, which remedy is in addition to any other remedy available under this section.

(4) The chief may construct or operate a plant or plants for the control and treatment of water pollution resulting from mine drainage. The extent of this control and treatment may be dependent upon the ultimate use of the water. Division (J)(4) of this section does not repeal or supersede any portion of the "Federal Water Pollution Control Act," 70 Stat. 498 (1965), 33 U.S.C.A. 1151, as amended, and no control or treatment under division (J)(4) of this section, in any way, shall be less than that required by that act. The construction of a plant or plants may include major interceptors and other facilities appurtenant to the plant.

(5) The chief may transfer money from the abandoned mine reclamation fund and the acid mine drainage abatement and treatment fund to other appropriate state agencies or to state universities or colleges in order to carry out the reclamation activities authorized by this section.

(K) The chief may contract for any part of work to be performed under this section, with or without advertising for bids, if the chief determines that a condition exists that could reasonably be expected to cause substantial physical harm to persons, property, or the environment and to which persons or improvements on real property are currently exposed.

The chief shall require every contractor performing reclamation work under this section to pay its



workers at the greater of their regular rate of pay, as established by contract, agreement, or prior custom or practice, or the average wage rate paid in this state for the same or similar work as determined by the chief under section 1513.02 of the Revised Code.

(L)(1) The chief may contract for the emergency restoration, reclamation, abatement, control, or prevention of adverse effects of mining practices on eligible lands if the chief determines that an emergency exists constituting a danger to the public health, safety, or welfare and that no other person or agency will act expeditiously to restore, reclaim, abate, control, or prevent those adverse effects. The chief may enter into a contract for emergency work under division (L) of this section without advertising for bids. Any such contract or any purchase of materials for emergency work under division (L) of this section is not subject to division (B) of section 127.16 of the Revised Code.

(2) The chief or the chief's agents, employees, or contractors may enter on any land where such an emergency exists, and on other land in order to have access to that land, in order to restore, reclaim, abate, control, or prevent the adverse effects of mining practices and to do all things necessary or expedient to protect the public health, safety, or welfare. Such an entry shall be construed as an exercise of the police power and shall not be construed as an act of condemnation of property or of trespass. The moneys expended for the work and the benefits accruing to any premises so entered upon shall be chargeable against the land and shall mitigate or offset any claim in or any action brought by any owner of any interest in the premises for any alleged damages by virtue of the entry. This provision is not intended to create new rights of action or eliminate existing immunities.