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DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

30 CFR Part 938

[PA-164-FOR, Docket ID: OSM-2016-0013

S1D1S SS08011000 DX064A000 178S180110

S2D2S SS08011000 SX064A000 17X501520]

Pennsylvania Regulatory Program

AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule; public comment period and opportunity for public hearing on proposed amendment.

SUMMARY: We, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), are announcing receipt of a proposed amendment to the Pennsylvania program under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA or the Act). Through this proposed amendment, Pennsylvania seeks to revise its program to further define the implementation process for the reclamation of alternative bonding system (ABS) “Legacy Sites”, and to clearly identify the current list of Legacy Sites, as well as sites that may qualify in the future as Legacy Sites.

This document gives the times and locations that the Pennsylvania program and this proposed amendment to that program are available for your inspection, the comment

period during which you may submit written comments on the amendment, and the procedures that we will follow for the public hearing, if one is requested.

DATES: We will accept written comments on this amendment until 4 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST), [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]. If requested, we will hold a public hearing on the amendment on [INSERT DATE 25 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]. We will accept requests to speak at a hearing until 4 p.m., EST. on [INSERT DATE 15 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by SATS No. PA-164-FOR; Docket ID: OSM-2016-0013 by any of the following methods:

- Mail/Hand Delivery: Mr. Ben Owens, Chief, Pittsburgh Field Division, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, 3 Parkway Center, Pittsburgh, PA, 15220.
- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the agency name and docket number for this rulemaking. For detailed instructions on submitting comments and additional information on the rulemaking process, see the “Public Comment Procedures” heading of

the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this document.

Docket: In addition to obtaining copies of documents at www.regulations.gov, you may receive one free copy of the amendment by contacting OSMRE's Pittsburgh Field Division. For access to the docket to review copies of the Pennsylvania program, this amendment, a listing of any scheduled public hearings, and all written comments received in response to this document, you may go to the address listed below during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Mr. Ben Owens, Chief, Pittsburgh Field Division

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

3 Parkway Center

Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Telephone: (412) 937-2827

E-mail: bowens@osmre.gov

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ben Owens, Chief, Pittsburgh Field Division, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

3 Parkway Center, Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Telephone: (412) 937-2827

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

- I. Background on the Pennsylvania Program
- II. Description of the Proposed Amendment
- III. Public Comment Procedures
- IV. Procedural Determinations

I. Background on the Pennsylvania Program

Section 503(a) of the Act permits a State to assume primacy for the regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations on non-Federal and non-Indian lands within its borders by demonstrating that its State program includes, among other things, State laws and regulations that govern surface coal mining and reclamation operations in accordance with the Act and consistent with the Federal regulations. See 30 U.S.C. 1253(a)(1) and (7). On the basis of these criteria, the Secretary of the Interior conditionally approved the Pennsylvania program on July 30, 1982.

You can find additional background information on the Pennsylvania program, including the Secretary's findings, the disposition of comments, and conditions of approval in the July 30, 1982, Federal Register, at 47 FR 33050. You can also find later actions concerning Pennsylvania's program and program amendments at 30 CFR 938.11, 938.12, 938.13, 938.15 and 938.16.

By letter dated August 1, 2008 (Administrative Record Number PA 802.43),

Pennsylvania sent us a proposed program amendment that was intended to satisfy a required amendment that was imposed by OSMRE in a final rule published in the Federal Register on May 31, 1991, at 56 FR 24687, and codified in the Federal Regulations at 30 CFR 938.16(h). This proposed program amendment, hereinafter referred to as the “ABS Program Amendment,” was also intended to satisfy requirements of an October 1, 1991, letter sent to the state pursuant to the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 732.17. (the “732 letter”). Among other things, the August 1, 2008, amendment proposed significant changes to the State’s revenue raising mechanism for the treatment of pollutional discharges at ABS Legacy Sites. The term “Legacy Sites” is defined in Section II, below. On August 10, 2010, we published a Federal Register notice announcing our partial approval of the ABS program amendment. *See* 75 FR 48526.

II. Description of the Proposed Amendment

By letter dated November 14, 2016 (Administrative Record No. PA 897.00), Pennsylvania sent us an amendment to its program under SMCRA (30 U.S.C. 1201 et seq.).

Pennsylvania is providing this program amendment to further define how the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (“Department”) will implement its obligation under the approved ABS Program Amendment consistent with OSMRE

oversight. As defined in 25 Pa. Code § 86.1, “ABS Legacy Sites” are “[m]ine sites, permitted under the Primacy Alternate Bonding System [ABS], that have a postmining pollutional discharge where the operator has defaulted on its obligation to adequately treat the discharge and, either the bond posted for the site is insufficient to cover the cost of treating the discharge, or a trust to cover the costs of treating the discharge was not fully funded and is insufficient to cover the cost of treating the discharge.”

- A. The proposed program amendment contains a current list of ABS Legacy Sites.
- B. The proposed program amendment provides a process for moving sites from the list of potential ABS Legacy Sites to the list of ABS Legacy Sites.
- C. The proposed program amendment includes the mechanisms by which a site can be added to the list of ABS Legacy Sites if bond release was improperly granted.
- D. The proposed amendment provides the criteria that must be met in order for a mine to be removed from the list of ABS Legacy Sites.
- E. The proposed program amendment requires the Department to request concurrence from OSMRE consistent with its oversight authority when sites are being added or removed from the list of ABS Legacy Sites or from the list of potential ABS Legacy Sites. This concurrence will be requested in writing through a letter or email message to the Pittsburgh Field Division, Harrisburg Area Office. The concurrence request will include a justification of the action. After the concurrence is received, the Department

will initiate the notice in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

The full text of the program amendment is available for you to read at the locations listed above under **ADDRESSES** or at www.regulations.gov.

III. Public Comment Procedures

Under the provisions of 30 CFR 732.17(h), we are seeking your comments on whether the amendment satisfies the applicable program approval criteria of 30 CFR 732.15. If we approve the amendment, it will become part of the Pennsylvania's State Program.

Electronic or Written Comments

If you submit written or electronic comments on the proposed rule during the 30-day comment period, they should be specific, confined to issues pertinent to the proposed regulations, and explain the reason for any recommended change(s). We appreciate any and all comments, but those most useful and likely to influence decisions on the final regulations will be those that either involve personal experience or include citations to and analyses of SMCRA, its legislative history, its implementing regulations, case law, other pertinent State or Federal laws or regulations, technical literature, or other relevant publications.

We cannot ensure that comments received after the close of the comment period (see

DATES) or sent to an address other than those listed (see **ADDRESSES**) will be included in the docket for this rulemaking and considered.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Public Hearing

If you wish to speak at the public hearing, contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** by 4:00 p.m., e.s.t. on [Insert date 15 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER]. If you are disabled and need reasonable accommodations to attend a public hearing, contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. We will arrange the location and time of the hearing with those persons requesting the hearing. If no one requests an opportunity to speak, we will not hold a hearing.

To assist the transcriber and ensure an accurate record, we request, if possible, that each person who speaks at the public hearing provide us with a written copy of his or her

comments. The public hearing will continue on the specified date until everyone scheduled to speak has been given an opportunity to be heard. If you are in the audience and have not been scheduled to speak and wish to do so, you will be allowed to speak after those who have been scheduled. We will end the hearing after everyone scheduled to speak, and others present in the audience who wish to speak, have been heard.

Public Meeting

If only one person requests an opportunity to speak, we may hold a public meeting rather than a public hearing. If you wish to meet with us to discuss the amendment, please request a meeting by contacting the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. All such meetings are open to the public and, if possible, we will post notices of meetings at the locations listed under **ADDRESSES**. We will make a written summary of each meeting a part of the administrative record.

IV. Procedural Determinations

Executive Order 12866 - Regulatory Planning and Review

This rule is exempted from review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under Executive Order 12866.

Other Laws and Executive Orders Affecting Rulemaking

When a State submits a program amendment to OSMRE for review, our regulations at 30 CFR 732.17(h) require us to publish a notice in the Federal Register indicating receipt of the proposed amendment, its text or a summary of its terms, and an opportunity for public comment. We conclude our review of the proposed amendment after the close of the public comment period and determine whether the amendment should be approved, approved in part, or not approved. At that time, we will also make the determinations and certifications required by the various laws and executive orders governing the rulemaking process and include them in the final rule.

List of Subjects in 30 CFR Part 938

Intergovernmental relations, Surface mining, Underground mining.

Dated: February 24, 2017.

Glenda H. Owens
Acting Director,
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
[FR Doc. 2017-04747 Filed: 3/9/2017 8:45 am; Publication Date: 3/10/2017]