

Pennsylvania Eligible for Over \$26 Million in Federal Funding to Help Reclaim Abandoned Mine Lands

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On March 4, 2022, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced that the commonwealth is eligible for almost \$26.5 million in Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund program annual grants. See Press Release, Gov. Tom Wolf, “Gov. Wolf Announces \$26.5 Million Federal Funding to Help Reclaim Abandoned Mine Lands” (Mar. 4, 2022). This is in addition to the almost \$250 million authorized for annual distribution to Pennsylvania over 15 years from the federal Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Trust Fund. See Press Release, Gov. Tom Wolf, “Gov. Wolf Announces \$244.9 Million Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Investment to Cleanup Pennsylvania’s Abandoned Mine Lands” (Feb. 7, 2022). The AML program was established pursuant to title IV of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-87, 91 Stat. 445, and the \$250 million annual distribution for Pennsylvania stems from President Joe Biden’s November 2021 bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 (2021).

In Governor Wolf’s March 4 announcement, he noted that AML funding supports jobs in coal communities and could lead to the reduction of methane emissions throughout the commonwealth. Pennsylvania expects to receive almost \$4 billion over the next 15 years to address contamination and pollution caused by coal mining and the estimated 5,000 abandoned mines throughout the commonwealth. In 2019, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) reported that the commonwealth had over 287,000 acres of land in need of reclamation, with the estimated cost of reclamation expected to exceed \$5 billion. See Fact Sheet, PADEP, “Pennsylvania’s Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act Funded Abandoned Mine Lands Program: Past, Present, and Future” (Mar. 2019). A year-by-year summary of the AML grants awarded to Pennsylvania is available on PADEP’s website at <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/Mining/AbandonedMineReclamation/AMLProgramInformation/Pages/AMLFunding.aspx>.

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