

ations for the on-site reprocessing of abandoned coal refuse and operations for the removal of abandoned coal refuse on lands that would otherwise be eligible for expenditure under section 404 and section 402(g)(4) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 [30 U.S.C. 1234, 1232(g)(4)].

(2) The standards and permit systems referred to in paragraph (1) shall distinguish between those operations which reprocess abandoned coal refuse on-site, and those operations which completely remove abandoned coal refuse from a site for the direct use of such coal refuse, or for the reprocessing of such coal refuse, at another location. Such standards and permit systems shall be premised on the distinct differences between operations for the on-site reprocessing, and operations for the removal, of abandoned coal refuse and other types of surface coal mining operations.

(3) The Secretary of the Interior may devise a different standard than any of those set forth in section 515 and section 516 of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 [30 U.S.C. 1265, 1266], and devise a separate permit system, if he determines, on a standard-by-standard basis, that a different standard may facilitate the on-site reprocessing, or the removal, of abandoned coal refuse in a manner that would provide the same level of environmental protection as under section 515 and section 516.

(4) Not later than 30 days prior to the publication of the proposed regulations referred to in this section, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the United States House of Representatives, and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate containing a detailed description of any environmental protection performance and reclamation standards, and separate permit systems, devised pursuant to this section.

(Pub. L. 102-486, title XXV, § 2503(e), Oct. 24, 1992, 106 Stat. 3103.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, referred to in par. (1), is Pub. L. 95-87, Aug. 3, 1977, 91 Stat. 445, as amended, which is classified generally to this chapter (§1201 et seq.). For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1201 of this title and Tables.

#### CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, and not as part of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 which comprises this chapter.

#### CHANGE OF NAME

Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of House of Representatives changed to Committee on Natural Resources of House of Representatives on Jan. 5, 1993, by House Resolution No. 5, One Hundred Third Congress.

### § 1252. Initial regulatory procedures

#### (a) State regulation

No person shall open or develop any new or previously mined or abandoned site for surface coal mining operations on lands on which such operations are regulated by a State unless such

person has obtained a permit from the State's regulatory authority.

#### (b) Interim standards

All surface coal mining operations on lands on which such operations are regulated by a State which commence operations pursuant to a permit issued on or after six months from August 3, 1977, shall comply, and such permits shall contain terms requiring compliance with, the provisions set out in subsection (c) of this section. Prior to final disapproval of a State program or prior to promulgation of a Federal program or a Federal lands program pursuant to this chapter, a State may issue such permits.

#### (c) Full compliance with environmental protection performance standards

On and after nine months from August 3, 1977, all surface coal mining operations on lands on which such operations are regulated by a State shall comply with the provisions of subsections (b)(2), (b)(3), (b)(5), (b)(10), (b)(13), (b)(15), (b)(19), and (d) of section 1265 of this title or, where a surface coal mining operation will remove an entire coal seam or seams running through the upper fraction of a mountain, ridge, or hill by removing all of the overburden and creating a level plateau or a gently rolling contour with no highwalls remaining, such operation shall comply with the requirements of section 1265(c)(4) and (5) of this title without regard to the requirements of section 1265(b)(3) or (d)(2) and (3) of this title, with respect to lands from which overburden and the coal seam being mined have not been removed: *Provided, however,* That surface coal mining operations in operation pursuant to a permit issued by a State before August 3, 1977, issued to a person as defined in section 1291(19) of this title in existence prior to May 2, 1977 and operated by a person whose total annual production of coal from surface and underground coal mining operations does not exceed one hundred thousand tons shall not be subject to the provisions of this subsection except with reference to the provision of section 1265(d)(1) of this title until January 1, 1979.

#### (d) Permit application

Not later than two months following the approval of a State program pursuant to section 1253 of this title or the implementation of a Federal program pursuant to section 1254 of this title, regardless of litigation contesting that approval or implementation, all operators of surface coal mines in expectation of operating such mines after the expiration of eight months from the approval of a State program or the implementation of a Federal program, shall file an application for a permit with the regulatory authority. Such application shall cover those lands to be mined after the expiration of eight months from the approval of a State program or the implementation of a Federal program. The regulatory authority shall process such applications and grant or deny a permit within eight months after the date of approval of the State program or the implementation of the Federal program, unless specially enjoined by a court of competent jurisdiction, but in no case later than forty-two months from August 3, 1977.

**(e) Federal enforcement program**

Within six months after August 3, 1977, the Secretary shall implement a Federal enforcement program which shall remain in effect in each State as surface coal mining operations are required to comply with the provisions of this chapter, until the State program has been approved pursuant to this chapter or until a Federal program has been implemented pursuant to this chapter. The enforcement program shall—

(1) include inspections of surface coal mine sites which may be made (but at least one inspection for every site every six months), without advance notice to the mine operator and for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with the standards of subsections (b) and (c) above. The Secretary shall order any necessary enforcement action to be implemented pursuant to the Federal enforcement provision of this subchapter to correct violations identified at the inspections;

(2) provide that upon receipt of inspection reports indicating that any surface coal mining operation has been found in violation of subsections (b) and (c) above, during not less than two consecutive State inspections or upon receipt by the Secretary of information which would give rise to reasonable belief that such standards are being violated by any surface coal mining operation, the Secretary shall order the immediate inspection of such operation by Federal inspectors and the necessary enforcement actions, if any, to be implemented pursuant to the Federal enforcement provisions of this subchapter. When the Federal inspection results from information provided to the Secretary by any person, the Secretary shall notify such person when the Federal inspection is proposed to be carried out and such person shall be allowed to accompany the inspector during the inspection;

(3) provide that the State regulatory agency file with the Secretary and with a designated Federal office centrally located in the county or area in which the inspected surface coal mine is located copies of inspection reports made;

(4) provide that moneys authorized by section 1302 of this title shall be available to the Secretary prior to the approval of a State program pursuant to this chapter to reimburse the State for conducting those inspections in which the standards of this chapter are enforced and for the administration of this section.<sup>1</sup>

(5) for purposes of this section, the term “Federal inspector” means personnel of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement and such additional personnel of the United States Geological Survey, Bureau of Land Management, or of the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration so designated by the Secretary, or such other personnel of the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, or the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service as arranged by appropriate agreement with the Secretary on a reimbursable or other basis;<sup>2</sup>

**(f) Interim period**

Following the final disapproval of a State program, and prior to promulgation of a Federal program or a Federal lands program pursuant to this chapter, including judicial review of such a program, existing surface coal mining operations may continue surface mining operations pursuant to the provisions of this section. During such period no new permits shall be issued by the State whose program has been disapproved. Permits which lapse during such period may continue in full force and effect until promulgation of a Federal program or a Federal lands program.

(Pub. L. 95–87, title V, § 502, Aug. 3, 1977, 91 Stat. 468.)

**§ 1253. State programs****(a) Regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations; submittal to Secretary; time limit; demonstration of effectiveness**

Each State in which there are or may be conducted surface coal mining operations on non-Federal lands, and which wishes to assume exclusive jurisdiction over the regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations, except as provided in sections 1271 and 1273 of this title and subchapter IV of this chapter, shall submit to the Secretary, by the end of the eighteenth-month<sup>1</sup> period beginning on August 3, 1977, a State program which demonstrates that such State has the capability of carrying out the provisions of this chapter and meeting its purposes through—

(1) a State law which provides for the regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations in accordance with the requirements of this chapter;

(2) a State law which provides sanctions for violations of State laws, regulations, or conditions of permits concerning surface coal mining and reclamation operations, which sanctions shall meet the minimum requirements of this chapter, including civil and criminal actions, forfeiture of bonds, suspensions, revocations, and withholding of permits, and the issuance of cease-and-desist orders by the State regulatory authority or its inspectors;

(3) a State regulatory authority with sufficient administrative and technical personnel, and sufficient funding to enable the State to regulate surface coal mining and reclamation operations in accordance with the requirements of this chapter;

(4) a State law which provides for the effective implementations,<sup>1</sup> maintenance, and enforcement of a permit system, meeting the requirements of this subchapter for the regulations<sup>1</sup> of surface coal mining and reclamation operations for coal on lands within the State;

(5) establishment of a process for the designation of areas as unsuitable for surface coal mining in accordance with section 1272 of this title provided that the designation of Federal lands unsuitable for mining shall be performed exclusively by the Secretary after consultation with the State; and<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So in original. The period probably should be a semicolon.

<sup>2</sup> So in original. The semicolon probably should be a period.

<sup>1</sup> So in original.