

(9) the steps to be taken to comply with applicable air and water quality laws and regulations and any applicable health and safety standards;

(10) the consideration which has been given to developing the reclamation plan in a manner consistent with local physical environmental, and climatological conditions;

(11) all lands, interests in lands, or options on such interests held by the applicant or pending bids on interests in lands by the applicant, which lands are contiguous to the area to be covered by the permit;

(12) the results of test boring which the applicant has made at the area to be covered by the permit, or other equivalent information and data in a form satisfactory to the regulatory authority, including the location of subsurface water, and an analysis of the chemical properties including acid forming properties of the mineral and overburden: *Provided*, That information which pertains only to the analysis of the chemical and physical properties of the coal (excepting information regarding such mineral or elemental contents which is potentially toxic in the environment) shall be kept confidential and not made a matter of public record;

(13) a detailed description of the measures to be taken during the mining and reclamation process to assure the protection of:

(A) the quality of surface and ground water systems, both on- and off-site, from adverse effects of the mining and reclamation process;

(B) the rights of present users to such water; and

(C) the quantity of surface and ground water systems, both on- and off-site, from adverse effects of the mining and reclamation process or to provide alternative sources of water where such protection of quantity cannot be assured;

(14) such other requirements as the regulatory authority shall prescribe by regulations.

(b) Any information required by this section which is not on public file pursuant to State law shall be held in confidence by the regulatory authority.

(Pub. L. 95-87, title V, § 508, Aug. 3, 1977, 91 Stat. 478.)

§ 1259. Performance bonds

(a) Filing with regulatory authority; scope; number and amount

After a surface coal mining and reclamation permit application has been approved but before such a permit is issued, the applicant shall file with the regulatory authority, on a form prescribed and furnished by the regulatory authority, a bond for performance payable, as appropriate, to the United States or to the State, and conditional upon faithful performance of all the requirements of this chapter and the permit. The bond shall cover that area of land within the permit area upon which the operator will initiate and conduct surface coal mining and reclamation operations within the initial term

of the permit. As succeeding increments of surface coal mining and reclamation operations are to be initiated and conducted within the permit area, the permittee shall file with the regulatory authority an additional bond or bonds to cover such increments in accordance with this section. The amount of the bond required for each bonded area shall depend upon the reclamation requirements of the approved permit; shall reflect the probable difficulty of reclamation giving consideration to such factors as topography, geology of the site, hydrology, and revegetation potential, and shall be determined by the regulatory authority. The amount of the bond shall be sufficient to assure the completion of the reclamation plan if the work had to be performed by the regulatory authority in the event of forfeiture and in no case shall the bond for the entire area under one permit be less than \$10,000.

(b) Liability period; execution

Liability under the bond shall be for the duration of the surface coal mining and reclamation operation and for a period coincident with operator's responsibility for revegetation requirements in section 1265 of this title. The bond shall be executed by the operator and a corporate surety licensed to do business in the State where such operation is located, except that the operator may elect to deposit cash, negotiable bonds of the United States Government or such State, or negotiable certificates of deposit of any bank organized or transacting business in the United States. The cash deposit or market value of such securities shall be equal to or greater than the amount of the bond required for the bonded area.

(c) Bond of applicant without separate surety; alternate system

The regulatory authority may accept the bond of the applicant itself without separate surety when the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the regulatory authority the existence of a suitable agent to receive service of process and a history of financial solvency and continuous operation sufficient for authorization to self-insure or bond such amount or in lieu of the establishment of a bonding program, as set forth in this section, the Secretary may approve as part of a State or Federal program an alternative system that will achieve the objectives and purposes of the bonding program pursuant to this section.

(d) Deposit of cash or securities

Cash or securities so deposited shall be deposited upon the same terms as the terms upon which surety bonds may be deposited. Such securities shall be security for the repayment of such negotiable certificate of deposit.

(e) Adjustments

The amount of the bond or deposit required and the terms of each acceptance of the applicant's bond shall be adjusted by the regulatory authority from time to time as affected land acreages are increased or decreased or where the cost of future reclamation changes.

(Pub. L. 95-87, title V, § 509, Aug. 3, 1977, 91 Stat. 479.)

§ 1260. Permit approval or denial**(a) Basis for decision; notification of applicant and local government officials; burden of proof**

Upon the basis of a complete mining application and reclamation plan or a revision or renewal thereof, as required by this chapter and pursuant to an approved State program or Federal program under the provisions of this chapter, including public notification and an opportunity for a public hearing as required by section 1263 of this title, the regulatory authority shall grant, require modification of, or deny the application for a permit in a reasonable time set by the regulatory authority and notify the applicant in writing. The applicant for a permit, or revision of a permit, shall have the burden of establishing that his application is in compliance with all the requirements of the applicable State or Federal program. Within ten days after the granting of a permit, the regulatory authority shall notify the local governmental officials in the local political subdivision in which the area of land to be affected is located that a permit has been issued and shall describe the location of the land.

(b) Requirements for approval

No permit or revision application shall be approved unless the application affirmatively demonstrates and the regulatory authority finds in writing on the basis of the information set forth in the application or from information otherwise available which will be documented in the approval, and made available to the applicant, that—

(1) the permit application is accurate and complete and that all the requirements of this chapter and the State or Federal program have been complied with;

(2) the applicant has demonstrated that reclamation as required by this chapter and the State or Federal program can be accomplished under the reclamation plan contained in the permit application;

(3) the assessment of the probable cumulative impact of all anticipated mining in the area on the hydrologic balance specified in section 1257(b) of this title has been made by the regulatory authority and the proposed operation thereof has been designed to prevent material damage to hydrologic balance outside permit area;

(4) the area proposed to be mined is not included within an area designated unsuitable for surface coal mining pursuant to section 1272 of this title or is not within an area under study for such designation in an administrative proceeding commenced pursuant to section 1272(a)(4)(D) or section 1272(c) of this title (unless in such an area as to which an administrative proceeding has commenced pursuant to section 1272(a)(4)(D) of this title, the operator making the permit application demonstrates that, prior to January 1, 1977, he has made substantial legal and financial commitments in relation to the operation for which he is applying for a permit);

(5) the proposed surface coal mining operation, if located west of the one hundredth meridian west longitude, would—

(A) not interrupt, discontinue, or preclude farming on alluvial valley floors that are irrigated or naturally subirrigated, but, excluding undeveloped range lands which are not significant to farming on said alluvial valley floors and those lands as to which the regulatory authority finds that if the farming that will be interrupted, discontinued, or precluded is of such small acreage as to be of negligible impact on the farm's agricultural production, or

(B) not materially damage the quantity or quality of water in surface or underground water systems that supply these valley floors in (A) of subsection (b)(5) of this section:

Provided, That this paragraph (5) shall not affect those surface coal mining operations which in the year preceding August 3, 1977, (I) produced coal in commercial quantities, and were located within or adjacent to alluvial valley floors or (II) had obtained specific permit approval by the State regulatory authority to conduct surface coal mining operations within said alluvial valley floors.

With respect to such surface mining operations which would have been within the purview of the foregoing proviso but for the fact that no coal was so produced in commercial quantities and no such specific permit approval was so received, the Secretary, if he determines that substantial financial and legal commitments were made by an operator prior to January 1, 1977, in connection with any such operation, is authorized, in accordance with such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, to enter into an agreement with that operator pursuant to which the Secretary may, notwithstanding any other provision of law, lease other Federal coal deposits to such operator in exchange for the relinquishment by such operator of his Federal lease covering coal deposits involving such mining operations, or pursuant to section 1716 of title 43, convey to the fee holder of any such coal deposits involving such mining operations the fee title to other available Federal coal deposits in exchange for the fee title to such deposits so involving such mining operations. It is the policy of the Congress that the Secretary shall develop and carry out a coal exchange program to acquire private fee coal precluded from being mined by the restrictions of this paragraph (5) in exchange for Federal coal which is not so precluded. Such exchanges shall be made under section 1716 of title 43;

(6) in cases where the private mineral estate has been severed from the private surface estate, the applicant has submitted to the regulatory authority—

(A) the written consent of the surface owner to the extraction of coal by surface mining methods; or

(B) a conveyance that expressly grants or reserves the right to extract the coal by surface mining methods; or

(C) if the conveyance does not expressly grant the right to extract coal by surface mining methods, the surface-subsurface legal relationship shall be determined in accordance with State law: *Provided*, That