

**§ 541f. Disbursement of moneys**

All moneys received under the provisions of this chapter shall be paid into the Treasury of the United States and distributed in the same manner as provided in section 191 of this title and sections 437, 438, and 439<sup>1</sup> of title 48.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 795, § 7, 69 Stat. 681.)

## REFERENCES IN TEXT

Sections 437, 438, and 439 of title 48, referred to in text, were repealed by Pub. L. 86-252, § 1, Sept. 9, 1959, 73 Stat. 490.

**§ 541g. Rules and regulations**

The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to issue such rules and regulations as may be necessary or appropriate to effectuate the purposes of this chapter.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 795, § 8, 69 Stat. 681.)

**§ 541h. Savings provision**

Nothing in this chapter shall be deemed to amend or repeal any provisions of chapter 12 of this title, or any right granted thereunder.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 795, § 9, 69 Stat. 681.)

**§ 541i. Withdrawal of lands from entry; expiration of claims**

Twenty years after August 11, 1955, all lands subject to the provisions of section 541 of this title shall be withdrawn from all forms of entry under this chapter. All claims made pursuant to the provisions of this chapter shall expire at that time, except for (1) claims for which patent has already been issued, and (2) claims on which application for patent has already been made and on which patent is subsequently issued: *Provided*, That, if the President shall so provide by Executive order, the provisions of this section shall not become effective until thirty years after August 11, 1955.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 795, § 10, 69 Stat. 681.)

**CHAPTER 13—CONTROL OF COAL-MINE FIRES**

Sec.	
551.	Declaration of policy.
552.	Definitions.
553.	Duties of Secretary; surveys, research, etc.; projects.
554.	Lands subject to chapter.
555.	Conditions precedent for aid to non-Federal lands.
556.	Administration.
557.	Rules and regulations.
558.	Authorization of appropriations.

**§ 551. Declaration of policy**

It is recognized that outcrop and underground fires in coal formations involve serious wastage of the fuel resources of the Nation, and constitute a menace to the health and safety of the public and to surface property. It is therefore declared to be the policy of the Congress to provide for the control and extinguishment of outcrop and underground coal fires and thereby to

prevent injuries and loss of life, protect public health, conserve natural resources, and to preserve public and private surface property.

(Aug. 31, 1954, ch. 1156, § 1, 68 Stat. 1009.)

## COAL FORMATIONS

Pub. L. 102-486, title XXV, § 2504(d)(1), (2), Oct. 24, 1992, 106 Stat. 3105, 3106, provided that:

“(1) In furtherance of the purposes of the Act of August 31, 1954 (30 U.S.C. 551-558) the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, shall, upon application by a State, enter into a cooperative agreement with any such State that has an approved abandoned mine reclamation program pursuant to section 405 of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 [30 U.S.C. 1235] to undertake the activities referred to in section 3(b) of the Act of August 31, 1954 (30 U.S.C. 553(b)). The Secretary shall immediately enter into such cooperative agreement upon application by a State. Any such cooperative agreement shall not be subject to review or approval by the Appalachian Regional Development Commission.

“(2) For the purposes of the cooperative agreements entered into pursuant to paragraph (1), the requirements of section 5 of the Act of August 31, 1954 (30 U.S.C. 555) are hereby waived.”

**§ 552. Definitions**

As used in this chapter:

“Coal” means any of the recognized classifications and ranks of coal, including anthracite, bituminous, semibituminous, subbituminous, and lignite.

“Outcrop” means any place where a formation is visible or substantially exposed at the surface.

“Formation” means any vein, seam, stratum, bed, or other naturally occurring deposit.

“Coal mine” means any underground, surface, or strip mine from which coal is obtained.

“State” means any State or Territory of the United States, or any political subdivision thereof.

“Person” means an individual, partnership, association, corporation, business trust, legal representative, or any organized group of persons.

(Aug. 31, 1954, ch. 1156, § 2, 68 Stat. 1009.)

**§ 553. Duties of Secretary; surveys, research, etc.; projects**

The Secretary of the Interior, in order to effectuate the policy declared in section 551 of this title, is hereby authorized—

(a) to conduct surveys, investigations, and research relating to the causes and extent of outcrop and underground fires in coal formations and the methods for control or extinguishment of such fires; to publish the results of any such surveys, investigations, and researches; and to disseminate information concerning such method; and

(b) to plan and execute projects for control or extinguishment of fires in coal formations.

(Aug. 31, 1954, ch. 1156, § 3, 68 Stat. 1009.)

**§ 554. Lands subject to chapter**

The acts authorized in section 553 of this title may be performed—

(a) on lands owned or controlled by the United States or any of its agencies, with the

<sup>1</sup> See References in Text note below.

cooperation of the agency having jurisdiction thereof; and

(b) on any other lands, upon obtaining proper consent or the necessary rights or interests in such lands: *Provided, however,* That expenditure of Federal funds for this purpose in any privately owned operating coal mine shall be limited to the acts authorized in section 553(a) of this title.

(Aug. 31, 1954, ch. 1156, § 4, 68 Stat. 1009.)

#### § 555. Conditions precedent for aid to non-Federal lands

##### (a) Enactment of local laws; agreements

As a condition to the extending of any benefits under section 553(b) of this title to any lands not owned or controlled by the United States or any of its agencies, except where such action is necessary for the protection of lands or other property owned or controlled by the United States or any of its agencies, the Secretary of the Interior may require—

(1) the enactment of State or local laws providing for the control and extinguishment of outcrop and underground fires in coal formations on State or privately owned land and the cooperation of State or local authorities in the work; and

(2) agreements or covenants as to the performance and maintenance of the work required to control or extinguish such fires.

##### (b) Contributions

The Secretary of the Interior shall require in connection with any project for the control or extinguishment of fires in any inactive coal mine on any lands not owned or controlled by the United States or any of its agencies, except where such project is necessary for the protection of lands or other property owned or controlled by the United States or any of its agencies, (1) that the State or person owning or controlling such lands contribute on a matching basis 50 per centum of the cost of planning and executing such project, or (2), if such State or person furnishes evidence satisfactory to the Secretary of the Interior of an inability to make the matching contribution herein provided for, that such State or person pay to the Government, within such period of time as the Secretary of the Interior shall determine, an amount equal to 50 per centum of the cost of planning and executing such project. At least 75 per centum of the funds expended in any fiscal year, from any appropriation available to carry out the purposes of this chapter, in connection with projects for the control or extinguishment of fires in inactive coal mines where such action is not necessary for the protection of lands or other property owned or controlled by the United States or any of its agencies, shall be expended in conformity with clause (1) of this subsection.

(Aug. 31, 1954, ch. 1156, § 5, 68 Stat. 1010.)

#### § 556. Administration

In carrying out the provisions of section 553 of this title the Secretary of the Interior is authorized—

##### (a) Employment of personnel

to secure, by contract or otherwise, and without regard to the civil service laws and chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, for work of a temporary, intermittent, or emergency character, such personal services as may be deemed necessary for the efficient and economical performance of the work;

##### (b) Employment of equipment

to hire, with or without personal services, work animals and animal-drawn and motor-propelled vehicles and equipment, at rates to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior and without regard to the provisions of section 6101 of title 41;

##### (c) Contractual authority

to procure all or any part of the surveys, investigations, and control or extinguishment work by contracts with engineers, contractors, or firms or corporations thereof;

##### (d) Acquisition of lands, etc.

to acquire lands or rights and interests therein, including improvements, by purchase, lease, gift, exchange, condemnation, or otherwise, whenever necessary for the purposes of this chapter;

##### (e) Property restoration

to repair, restore, or replace private property damaged or destroyed as a result of, or incident to, operations under this chapter; and

##### (f) Contributions; cooperation with other agencies; disposition of moneys

to receive and accept money and property, real or personal, or interests therein, as a gift, bequest, or contribution, for use in any of the activities authorized under this chapter; and to conduct any of the activities authorized under this chapter in cooperation with any person or agency, Federal, State, or private. Any money so received shall be deposited in the Treasury of the United States in an available trust fund to be disbursed by the Secretary of the Treasury upon certification by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the terms of the grant, and shall remain available until expended for the purposes for which received and accepted.

(Aug. 31, 1954, ch. 1156, § 6, 68 Stat. 1010.)

#### CODIFICATION

In subsec. (a), “chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5” substituted for “the Classification Act of 1949, as amended” on authority of Pub. L. 89-554, § 7(b), Sept. 6, 1966, 80 Stat. 631, the first section of which enacted Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

In subsec. (b), “section 6101 of title 41” substituted for “section 3709, Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C., sec. 5)” on authority of Pub. L. 111-350, § 6(c), Jan. 4, 2011, 124 Stat. 3854, which Act enacted Title 41, Public Contracts.

#### § 557. Rules and regulations

The Secretary of the Interior may issue rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this chapter.

(Aug. 31, 1954, ch. 1156, § 7, 68 Stat. 1011.)