

§ 1276. Judicial review**(a) Review by United States District Court; venue; filing of petition; time**

(1) Any action of the Secretary to approve or disapprove a State program or to prepare or promulgate a Federal program pursuant to this chapter shall be subject to judicial review by the United States District Court for the District which includes the capital of the State whose program is at issue. Any action by the Secretary promulgating national rules or regulations including standards pursuant to sections 1251, 1265, 1266, and 1273 of this title shall be subject to judicial review in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia Circuit. Any other action constituting rulemaking by the Secretary shall be subject to judicial review only by the United States District Court for the District in which the surface coal mining operation is located. Any action subject to judicial review under this subsection shall be affirmed unless the court concludes that such action is arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise inconsistent with law. A petition for review of any action subject to judicial review under this subsection shall be filed in the appropriate Court within sixty days from the date of such action, or after such date if the petition is based solely on grounds arising after the sixtieth day. Any such petition may be made by any person who participated in the administrative proceedings and who is aggrieved by the action of the Secretary.

(2) Any order or decision issued by the Secretary in a civil penalty proceeding or any other proceeding required to be conducted pursuant to section 554 of title 5 shall be subject to judicial review on or before 30 days from the date of such order or decision in accordance with subsection (b) of this section in the United States District Court for the district in which the surface coal mining operation is located. In the case of a proceeding to review an order or decision issued by the Secretary under the penalty section of this chapter, the court shall have jurisdiction to enter an order requiring payment of any civil penalty assessment enforced by its judgment. This availability of review established in this subsection shall not be construed to limit the operations of rights established in section 1270 of this title.

(b) Evidence; conclusiveness of findings; orders

The court shall hear such petition or complaint solely on the record made before the Secretary. Except as provided in subsection (a), the findings of the Secretary if supported by substantial evidence on the record considered as a whole, shall be conclusive. The court may affirm, vacate, or modify any order or decision or may remand the proceedings to the Secretary for such further action as it may direct.

(c) Temporary relief; prerequisites

In the case of a proceeding to review any order or decision issued by the Secretary under this chapter, including an order or decision issued pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of section 1275 of this title pertaining to any order issued under paragraph (2), (3), or (4) of subsection (a) of section 1271 of this title for cessation of coal mining and reclamation operations, the court may,

under such conditions as it may prescribe, grant such temporary relief as it deems appropriate pending final determination of the proceedings if—

(1) all parties to the proceedings have been notified and given an opportunity to be heard on a request for temporary relief;

(2) the person requesting such relief shows that there is a substantial likelihood that he will prevail on the merits of the final determination of the proceeding; and

(3) such relief will not adversely affect the public health or safety or cause significant imminent environmental harm to land, air, or water resources.

(d) Stay of action, order, or decision of Secretary

The commencement of a proceeding under this section shall not, unless specifically ordered by the court, operate as a stay of the action, order, or decision of the Secretary.

(e) Action of State regulatory authority

Action of the State regulatory authority pursuant to an approved State program shall be subject to judicial review by a court of competent jurisdiction in accordance with State law, but the availability of such review shall not be construed to limit the operation of the rights established in section 1270 of this title except as provided therein.

(Pub. L. 95-87, title V, §526, Aug. 3, 1977, 91 Stat. 512.)

§ 1277. Special bituminous coal mines**(a) Issuance of separate regulations; criteria**

The regulatory authority is authorized to issue separate regulations for those special bituminous coal surface mines located west of the 100th meridian west longitude which meet the following criteria:

(1) the excavation of the specific mine pit takes place on the same relatively limited site for an extended period of time;

(2) the excavation of the specific mine pit follows a coal seam having an inclination of fifteen degrees or more from the horizontal, and continues in the same area proceeding downward with lateral expansion of the pit necessary to maintain stability or as necessary to accommodate the orderly expansion of the total mining operation;

(3) the excavation of the specific mine pit involves the mining of more than one coal seam and mining has been initiated on the deepest coal seam contemplated to be mined in the current operation;

(4) the amount of material removed is large in proportion to the surface area disturbed;

(5) there is no practicable alternative method of mining the coal involved;

(6) there is no practicable method to reclaim the land in the manner required by this chapter; and

(7) the specific mine pit has been actually producing coal since January 1, 1972, in such manner as to meet the criteria set forth in this section, and, because of past duration of mining, is substantially committed to a mode of operation which warrants exceptions to some provisions of this subchapter.