

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 315

To amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to authorize partnerships between States and nongovernmental entities for the purpose of reclaiming and restoring land and water resources adversely affected by coal mining activities before August 3, 1977, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 8, 2019

Mr. LAHOOD introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to authorize partnerships between States and nongovernmental entities for the purpose of reclaiming and restoring land and water resources adversely affected by coal mining activities before August 3, 1977, and for other purposes.

1        *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2        *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3        **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4        This Act may be cited as the “Community Reclama-  
5        tion Partnerships Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. REFERENCE.**

2 Except as otherwise specifically provided, whenever in  
3 this Act an amendment is expressed in terms of an amend-  
4 ment to a provision, the reference shall be considered to  
5 be made to a provision of the Surface Mining Control and  
6 Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1201 et seq.).

7 **SEC. 3. STATE MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING FOR CER-**  
8 **TAIN REMEDIATION.**

9 (a) MEMORANDA AUTHORIZED.—Section 405 (30  
10 U.S.C. 1235) is amended by inserting after subsection (l)  
11 the following:

12 “(m) STATE MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING FOR  
13 REMEDIATION OF MINE DRAINAGE.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A State with a State pro-  
15 gram approved under subsection (d) may enter into  
16 a memorandum of understanding with relevant Fed-  
17 eral or State agencies (or both) to remediate mine  
18 drainage on abandoned mine land and water im-  
19 pacted by abandoned mines within the State. The  
20 memorandum may be updated as necessary and re-  
21 submitted for approval under this subsection.

22 “(2) MEMORANDA REQUIREMENTS.—Such  
23 memorandum shall establish a strategy satisfactory  
24 to the State and Federal agencies that are parties  
25 to the memorandum, to address water pollution re-  
26 sulting from mine drainage at sites eligible for rec-

1       lamation and mine drainage abatement expenditures  
2       under section 404, including specific procedures  
3       for—

4               “(A) ensuring that activities carried out to  
5       address mine drainage will result in improved  
6       water quality;

7               “(B) monitoring, sampling, and the report-  
8       ing of collected information as necessary to  
9       achieve the condition required under subpara-  
10      graph (A);

11              “(C) operation and maintenance of treat-  
12      ment systems as necessary to achieve the condi-  
13      tion required under subparagraph (A); and

14              “(D) other purposes, as considered nec-  
15      essary by the State or Federal agencies, to  
16      achieve the condition required under subpara-  
17      graph (A).

18      “(3) PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT.—

19              “(A) IN GENERAL.—Before submitting a  
20      memorandum to the Secretary and the Admin-  
21      istrator for approval, a State shall—

22                      “(i) invite interested members of the  
23                      public to comment on the memorandum;  
24                      and

1           “(ii) hold at least one public meeting  
2           concerning the memorandum in a location  
3           or locations reasonably accessible to per-  
4           sons who may be affected by implementa-  
5           tion of the memorandum.

6           “(B) NOTICE OF MEETING.—The State  
7           shall publish notice of each meeting not less  
8           than 15 days before the date of the meeting, in  
9           local newspapers of general circulation, on the  
10          Internet, and by any other means considered  
11          necessary or desirable by the Secretary and the  
12          Administrator.

13          “(4) SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL.—The State  
14          shall submit the memorandum to the Secretary and  
15          the Administrator of the Environmental Protection  
16          Agency for approval. The Secretary and the Admin-  
17          istrator shall approve or disapprove the memo-  
18          randum within 120 days after the date of its sub-  
19          mission if the Secretary and Administrator find that  
20          the memorandum will facilitate additional activities  
21          under the State Reclamation Plan under subsection  
22          (e) that improve water quality.

23          “(5) TREATMENT AS PART OF STATE PLAN.—  
24          A memorandum of a State that is approved by the  
25          Secretary and the Administrator under this sub-

1 section shall be considered part of the approved  
2 abandoned mine reclamation plan of the State.

3 “(n) COMMUNITY RECLAIMER PARTNERSHIPS.—

4 “(1) PROJECT APPROVAL.—Within 120 days  
5 after receiving such a submission, the Secretary  
6 shall approve a Community Reclaimer project to re-  
7 mediate abandoned mine lands if the Secretary finds  
8 that—

9 “(A) the proposed project will be con-  
10 ducted by a Community Reclaimer as defined in  
11 this subsection or approved subcontractors of  
12 the Community Reclaimer;

13 “(B) for any proposed project that remedi-  
14 ates mine drainage, the proposed project is con-  
15 sistent with an approved State memorandum of  
16 understanding under subsection (m);

17 “(C) the proposed project will be con-  
18 ducted on a site or sites inventoried under sec-  
19 tion 403(e);

20 “(D) the proposed project meets all sub-  
21 mission criteria under paragraph (2);

22 “(E) the relevant State has entered into an  
23 agreement with the Community Reclaimer  
24 under which the State shall assume all respon-  
25 sibility with respect to the project for any costs

1 or damages resulting from any action or inaction on the part of the Community Reclaimer in  
2 carrying out the project, except for costs or  
3 damages resulting from gross negligence or intentional  
4 misconduct by the Community Reclaimer, on behalf of—

5 “(i) the Community Reclaimer; and

6 “(ii) the owner of the proposed project  
7 site,

8 if such Community Reclaimer or owner, respectively, did not participate in any way in the  
9 creation of site conditions at the proposed project  
10 site or activities that caused any lands or  
11 waters to become eligible for reclamation or  
12 drainage abatement expenditures under section  
13 404;

14 “(F) the State has the necessary legal authority to conduct the project and will obtain all  
15 legally required authorizations, permits, licenses, and other approvals to ensure completion  
16 of the project;

17 “(G) the State has sufficient financial resources to ensure completion of the project, including  
18 any necessary operation and maintenance costs (including costs associated with  
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1 emergency actions covered by a contingency  
2 plan under paragraph (2)(K)); and

3 “(H) the proposed project is not in a cat-  
4 egory of projects that would require a permit  
5 under title V.

6 “(2) PROJECT SUBMISSION.—The State shall  
7 submit a request for approval to the Secretary that  
8 shall include—

9 “(A) a description of the proposed project,  
10 including any engineering plans that must bear  
11 the seal of a professional engineer;

12 “(B) a description of the proposed project  
13 site or sites, including, if relevant, the nature  
14 and extent of pollution resulting from mine  
15 drainage;

16 “(C) identification of the past and current  
17 owners and operators of the proposed project  
18 site;

19 “(D) the agreement or contract between  
20 the relevant State and the Community Re-  
21 claimer to carry out the project;

22 “(E) a determination that the project will  
23 facilitate the activities of the State reclamation  
24 plan under subsection (e);

1           “(F) sufficient information to determine  
2 whether the Community Reclaimer has the  
3 technical capability and expertise to successfully  
4 conduct the proposed project;

5           “(G) a cost estimate for the project and  
6 evidence that the Community Reclaimer has  
7 sufficient financial resources to ensure the suc-  
8 cessful completion of the proposed project (in-  
9 cluding any operation or maintenance costs);

10           “(H) a schedule for completion of the  
11 project;

12           “(I) an agreement between the Community  
13 Reclaimer and the current owner of the site  
14 governing access to the site;

15           “(J) sufficient information to ensure that  
16 the Community Reclaimer meets the definition  
17 under paragraph (3);

18           “(K) a contingency plan designed to be  
19 used in response to unplanned adverse events  
20 that includes emergency actions, response, and  
21 notifications; and

22           “(L) a requirement that the State provide  
23 notice to adjacent and downstream landowners  
24 and the public and hold a public meeting near



1 the proposed project site before the project is  
2 initiated.

3 “(3) COMMUNITY RECLAIMER DEFINED.—For  
4 purposes of this section, the term ‘Community Re-  
5 claimer’ means any person who—

6 “(A) seeks to voluntarily assist a State  
7 with a reclamation project under this section;

8 “(B) did not participate in any way in the  
9 creation of site conditions at the proposed  
10 project site or activities that caused any lands  
11 or waters to become eligible for reclamation or  
12 drainage abatement expenditures under section  
13 404;

14 “(C) is not a past or current owner or op-  
15 erator of any site with ongoing reclamation obli-  
16 gations; and

17 “(D) is not subject to outstanding viola-  
18 tions listed pursuant to section 510(e).”.

19 **SEC. 4. CLARIFYING STATE LIABILITY FOR MINE DRAINAGE**  
20 **PROJECTS.**

21 Section 413(d) (30 U.S.C. 1242(d)) is amended in  
22 the second sentence by inserting “unless such control or  
23 treatment will be conducted in accordance with a State  
24 memorandum of understanding approved under section

1 405(m) of this Act” after “Control Act” the second place  
2 it appears.

3 **SEC. 5. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**

4 Section 405(f) (30 U.S.C. 1235(f)) is amended—

5 (1) by striking the “and” after the semicolon in  
6 paragraph (6);

7 (2) by striking the period at the end of para-  
8 graph (7) and inserting “; and”; and

9 (3) by inserting at the end the following:

10 “(8) a list of projects proposed under sub-  
11 section (n).”.

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