

Human Services to settle administrative tort claims presented pursuant to the Federal Tort Claims Act where the amount of the settlement does not exceed \$200,000. This Directive implements the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act. This Directive will alert the general public to the new authority and is being published in the CFR to provide a permanent record of this delegation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 5, 2003

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Phyllis J. Pyles, Director, Torts Branch, Civil Division, U.S. Department of Justice, P.O. Box 888, Washington, DC 20044, (202) 616-4252.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This Directive has been issued to delegate settlement authority and is a matter solely related to the division of responsibility between the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services. It does not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. 5 U.S.C. 605(b). It is not a significant regulatory action within the meaning of Executive Order No. 12866.

List of Subjects in 28 CFR Part 14

Authority delegations (government agencies), Claims.

■ By virtue of the authority vested in me by part 0 of title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations, including §§ 0.45, 0.160, 0.162, 0.164, and 0.168, 28 CFR part 14 is amended as follows:

PART 14—ADMINISTRATIVE CLAIMS UNDER THE FEDERAL TORT CLAIMS ACT

■ 1. The authority citation for part 14 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 301; 28 U.S.C. 509, 510, 2672; 38 U.S.C. 224(a).

■ 2. The Appendix to Part 14 is amended by adding a new provision at the end of the Appendix to read as follows:

Appendix to Part 14—Delegations of Settlement Authority

* * * * *

Delegation of Authority to the Secretary of Health and Human Services

Section 1. Authority to Compromise Tort Claims.

(a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall have the authority to adjust, determine, compromise, and settle a claim involving the Department of Health and Human Services under section 2672 of title 28, United States Code, relating to the administrative settlement of federal tort claims, if the amount of the proposed adjustment, compromise, or award does not exceed \$200,000. When the Secretary of

Health and Human Services believes a claim pending before him presents a novel question of law or policy, he shall obtain the advice of the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Civil Division.

(b) The Secretary of Health and Human Services may redelegate, in writing, the settlement authority delegated to him under this section.

Section 2. Memorandum.

Whenever the Secretary of Health and Human Services settles any administrative claim pursuant to the authority granted by section 1 for an amount in excess of \$100,000 and within the amount delegated to him under section 1, a memorandum fully explaining the basis for the action taken shall be executed. A copy of this memorandum shall be sent to the Director, FTCA Staff, Torts Branch of the Civil Division.

Peter D. Keisler,

Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

30 CFR Part 943

[TX-50-FOR]

Texas Regulatory Program

AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Interior.

ACTION: Final rule; approval of amendment.

SUMMARY: We, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM), are approving an amendment to the Texas regulatory program (Texas program) under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA or the Act). Texas proposed revisions to its regulations regarding permit fees. Texas intends to revise its program to improve operational efficiency.

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 5, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael C. Wolfrom, Director, Tulsa Field Office. Telephone: (918) 581-6430. Internet address: mwolfrom@osmre.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

- I. Background on the Texas Program
- II. Submission of the Amendment
- III. OSM's Findings
- IV. Summary and Disposition of Comments
- V. OSM's Decision
- VI. Procedural Determinations

I. Background on the Texas Program

Section 503(a) of the Act permits a State to assume primacy for the

regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations on non-Federal and non-Indian lands within its borders by demonstrating that its State program includes, among other things, "a State law which provides for the regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations in accordance with the requirements of this Act * * *; and rules and regulations consistent with regulations issued by the Secretary pursuant to this Act." See 30 U.S.C. 1253(a)(1) and (7). On the basis of these criteria, the Secretary of the Interior conditionally approved the Texas program effective February 16, 1980. You can find background information on the Texas program, including the Secretary's findings, the disposition of comments, and the conditions of approval, in the February 27, 1980, **Federal Register** (45 FR 12998). You can find later actions on the Texas program at 30 CFR 943.10, 943.15, and 943.16.

II. Submission of the Amendment

By letter dated July 10, 2003 (Administrative Record No. TX-655), Texas sent us an amendment to its program under SMCRA (30 U.S.C. 1201 *et seq.*). Texas sent the amendment at its own initiative.

We announced receipt of the proposed amendment in the August 15, 2003, **Federal Register** (68 FR 48844). In the same document, we opened the public comment period and provided an opportunity for a public hearing or meeting on the adequacy of the amendment. We did not hold a public hearing or meeting because no one requested one. The public comment period ended on September 15, 2003. We did not receive any public comments.

During our review of the amendment, we identified concerns about the proposed annual fee. We notified Texas of these concerns by letters dated August 22, 2003, and September 15, 2003 (Administrative Record Nos. TX-655.03 and TX-655.05, respectively). By letters dated September 4, 2003, and September 24, 2003 (Administrative Record Nos. TX-655.04 and TX-655.06, respectively), Texas sent us additional explanatory information to its proposed program amendment. Because the additional information merely clarified certain provisions of Texas' amendment, we did not reopen the public comment period.

III. OSM's Findings

Following are the findings we made concerning the amendment under SMCRA and the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 732.15 and 732.17. We are approving the amendment as described

below. Any revisions that we do not specifically discuss below concern nonsubstantive wording or editorial changes.

16 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 12.108 Permit Fees

In paragraph (b), Texas proposed to increase the annual permit fee from \$120.00 per acre to \$300.00 per acre. Permittees must pay the fee to the Commission for each acre of land within the permit area on which the permittees actually conducted operations for the removal of coal and lignite during the calendar year. Because this increased fee had an effective date of September 1, 2003, Texas also proposed how it is to be calculated for calendar year 2003 only. For the period January 1, 2003, through August 31, 2003, the annual permit fee is \$120.00 per acre and for the period September 1, 2003, through December 31, 2003, the fee is \$300.00 per acre.

The Federal regulations at 30 CFR 777.17, concerning permit fees, provide that applications for surface coal mining permits must be accompanied by a fee determined by the regulatory authority. The Federal regulations also provide that the fees may be less than, but not more than the actual or anticipated cost of reviewing, administering, and enforcing the permit. The annual permit fee increase proposed by Texas is the first such increase since the provision in the Texas Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Act that authorizes the Commission to set the fee became effective September 1, 1985. We find that Texas' proposed permit fees including the annual permit fee are reasonable and consistent with the discretionary authority provided by the regulations at 30 CFR 777.17.

IV. Summary and Disposition of Comments

Public Comments

We asked for public comments on the amendment, but did not receive any.

Federal Agency Comments

On July 25, 2003, under 30 CFR 732.17(h)(11)(i) and section 503(b) of SMCRA, we requested comments on the amendment from various Federal agencies with an actual or potential interest in the Texas program (Administrative Record No. TX-655.01). We did not receive any comments.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Concurrence and Comments

Under 30 CFR 732.17(h)(11)(ii), we are required to get a written concurrence from EPA for those provisions of the program amendment that relate to air or

water quality standards issued under the authority of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 *et seq.*) or the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*). None of the revisions that Texas proposed to make in this amendment pertain to air or water quality standards. Therefore, we did not ask EPA to concur on the amendment. However, on July 25, 2003, under 30 CFR 732.17(h)(11)(i), we requested comments on the amendment from the EPA (Administrative Record No. TX-655.01). The EPA did not respond to our request.

State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)

Under 30 CFR 732.17(h)(4), we are required to request comments from the SHPO and ACHP on amendments that may have an effect on historic properties. On July 25, 2003, we requested comments on Texas' amendment (Administrative Record No. TX-655.01), but neither responded to our request.

V. OSM's Decision

Based on the above findings, we approve the amendment Texas sent us on July 10, 2003.

We approve the regulations proposed by Texas with the provision that they be fully promulgated in identical form to the regulations submitted to and reviewed by OSM and the public.

To implement this decision, we are amending the Federal regulations at 30 CFR Part 943, which codify decisions concerning the Texas program. We find that good cause exists under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to make this final rule effective immediately. Section 503(a) of SMCRA requires that the State's program demonstrate that the State has the capability of carrying out the provisions of the Act and meeting its purposes. Making this rule effective immediately will expedite that process. SMCRA requires consistency of State and Federal standards.

VI. Procedural Determinations

Executive Order 12630—Takings

This rule does not have takings implications. This determination is based on the analysis performed for the counterpart Federal regulation.

Executive Order 12866—Regulatory Planning and Review

This rule is exempted from review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under Executive Order 12866.

Executive Order 12988—Civil Justice Reform

The Department of the Interior has conducted the reviews required by section 3 of Executive Order 12988 and has determined that this rule meets the applicable standards of subsections (a) and (b) of that section. However, these standards are not applicable to the actual language of State regulatory programs and program amendments because each program is drafted and promulgated by a specific State, not by OSM. Under sections 503 and 505 of SMCRA (30 U.S.C. 1253 and 1255) and the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 730.11, 732.15, and 732.17(h)(10), decisions on proposed State regulatory programs and program amendments submitted by the States must be based solely on a determination of whether the submittal is consistent with SMCRA and its implementing Federal regulations and whether the other requirements of 30 CFR Parts 730, 731, and 732 have been met.

Executive Order 13132—Federalism

This rule does not have Federalism implications. SMCRA delineates the roles of the Federal and State governments with regard to the regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations. One of the purposes of SMCRA is to "establish a nationwide program to protect society and the environment from the adverse effects of surface coal mining operations." Section 503(a)(1) of SMCRA requires that State laws regulating surface coal mining and reclamation operations be "in accordance with" the requirements of SMCRA, and section 503(a)(7) requires that State programs contain rules and regulations "consistent with" regulations issued by the Secretary pursuant to SMCRA.

Executive Order 13175—Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments

In accordance with Executive Order 13175, we have evaluated the potential effects of this rule on Federally-recognized Indian tribes and have determined that the rule does not have substantial direct effects on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes. This determination is based on the fact that the Texas program does not regulate coal exploration and surface coal mining and reclamation operations on Indian lands. Therefore, the Texas

program has no effect on Federally-recognized Indian tribes.

Executive Order 13211—Regulations That Significantly Affect the Supply, Distribution, or Use of Energy

On May 18, 2001, the President issued Executive Order 13211 which requires agencies to prepare a Statement of Energy Effects for a rule that is (1) considered significant under Executive Order 12866, and (2) likely to have a significant adverse effect on the supply, distribution, or use of energy. Because this rule is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866 and is not expected to have a significant adverse effect on the supply, distribution, or use of energy, a Statement of Energy Effects is not required.

National Environmental Policy Act

This rule does not require an environmental impact statement because section 702(d) of SMCRA (30 U.S.C. 1292(d)) provides that agency decisions on proposed State regulatory program provisions do not constitute major Federal actions within the meaning of section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).

Paperwork Reduction Act

This rule does not contain information collection requirements that require approval by OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3507 *et seq.*).

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Department of the Interior certifies that this rule will not have a

significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). The State submittal, which is the subject of this rule, is based upon counterpart Federal regulations for which an economic analysis was prepared and certification made that such regulations would not have a significant economic effect upon a substantial number of small entities. In making the determination as to whether this rule would have a significant economic impact, the Department relied upon the data and assumptions for the counterpart Federal regulations.

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

This rule is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804(2), the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act. This rule: (a) Does not have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million; (b) Will not cause a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, individual industries, Federal, State, or local government agencies, or geographic regions; and (c) Does not have significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of U.S.-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises. This determination is based upon the fact that the State submittal, which is the subject of this rule, is based upon counterpart Federal regulations for which an analysis was prepared and a determination made that the Federal regulation was not considered a major rule.

Unfunded Mandates

This rule will not impose an unfunded mandate on State, local, or tribal governments or the private sector of \$100 million or more in any given year. This determination is based upon the fact that the State submittal, which is the subject of this rule, is based upon counterpart Federal regulations for which an analysis was prepared and a determination made that the Federal regulation did not impose an unfunded mandate.

List of Subjects in 30 CFR Part 943

Intergovernmental relations, Surface mining, Underground mining.

Dated: October 16, 2003.

Charles E. Sandberg,

Acting Regional Director, Mid-Continent Regional Coordinating Center.

■ For the reasons set out in the preamble, 30 CFR part 943 is amended as set forth below:

PART 943—TEXAS

■ 1. The authority citation for part 943 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 30 U.S.C. 1201 *et seq.*

■ 2. Section 943.15 is amended in the table by adding a new entry in chronological order by “Date of final publication” to read as follows:

§ 943.15 Approval of Texas regulatory program amendments.

* * * * *

Original amendment submission date	Date of final publication	Citation/description
* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *
July 10, 2003	November 5, 2003.	TAC 12.108(b)

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
30 CFR Part 950
[WY-031-FOR Rule Package 1J]
Wyoming Regulatory Program

AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Interior.

ACTION: Final rule; approval of amendment.

SUMMARY: We are approving a proposed amendment to the Wyoming regulatory program (the “Wyoming program”) under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA or the Act). Wyoming proposed revisions to its coal rules about roads, mine facilities, and excess spoil. Wyoming intends to revise its program to be consistent with the corresponding Federal regulations and clarify ambiguities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 5, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Guy Padgett, Telephone: 307/261-6550, Internet address: GPadgett@osmre.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

- I. Background on the Wyoming Program
- II. Submission of the Proposed Amendment
- III. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement’s (OSM’s) Findings
- IV. Summary and Disposition of Comments
- V. OSM’s Decision
- VI. Procedural Determinations

I. Background on the Wyoming Program

Section 503(a) of the Act permits a State to assume primacy for the regulation of surface coal mining and