DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

30 CFR Part 917
[KY–248–FOR]

Kentucky Regulatory Program

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

ACTION: Proposed rule; public comment period and opportunity for public hearing on proposed amendment.

SUMMARY: We are announcing receipt of information from Kentucky pertaining to its regulatory program (the “Kentucky program”) under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA or the Act). Kentucky submitted examples of common husbandry practices in response to a required amendment. We are reviewing that information to determine if it satisfies our requirements. If so, the required amendment will be removed and the provisions previously disapproved will be approved. The decision will be announced in a future Federal Register notice.

This document gives the times and locations that the Kentucky program and this submittal are available for your inspection, the comment period during which you may submit written comments, and the procedures that we will follow for the public hearing, if one is requested.

DATES: We will accept written comments until 4 p.m., e.s.t., October 14, 2004. If requested, we will hold a public hearing on October 9, 2004.

Kentucky has submitted examples of common husbandry practices within Kentucky. We will accept requests to speak until 4 p.m., e.s.t., on September 29, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by “KY–248–FOR/ Administrative Record No. 1634” by any of the following methods:

• E-mail: bkovacic@osmre.gov.
• Mail/Hand Delivery: William J. Kovacic, Lexington Field Office, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, 2675 Regency Road, Lexington, Kentucky 40503, Telephone: (859) 260–8400.
• Federal eRulemaking Portal: http://www.regulations.gov. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the agency docket number “KY–248–FOR/Administrative Record No. KY–1634” for this rulemaking. For detailed instructions on submitting comments and additional information on the rulemaking process, see the “Public Comment Procedures” section in this document. You may also request to speak at a public hearing by any of the methods listed above or by contacting the individual listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

Docket: You may review copies of the Kentucky program, this submission, a listing of any scheduled public hearings, and all written comments received in response to this document at OSM’s Lexington Field Office at the address listed above during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. You may receive your free copy of the submission by contacting OSM’s Lexington Field Office. In addition, you may receive a copy of the submission during regular business hours at the following location: Department for Natural Resources, 2 Hudson Hollow Complex, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601, Telephone: (502) 564–6940.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William J. Kovacic, Telephone: (859) 260–8400. Internet: bkovacic@osmre.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background on the Kentucky Program

Section 503(a) of the Act permits a State to assume primacy for the regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations in accordance with the requirements of the Act and rules and regulations consistent with regulations issued by the Secretary pursuant to the 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 Kentucky program on May 18, 1982. You can find background information on the Kentucky program, including the Secretary’s findings, the disposition of comments, and conditions of approval of the Kentucky program in the May 18, 1982, Federal Register (47 FR 21434). You can also find later actions concerning Kentucky’s program and program amendments at 30 CFR 917.11, 917.12, 917.13, 917.15, 917.16, and 917.17.

II. Description of the Submission

By letter dated July 29, 2004, Kentucky sent us information pertaining to its program, [(KY–248–FOR), Administrative Record No. KY–1634], under SMCRA (30 U.S.C. 1201 et seq.), in response to a required amendment at 30 CFR 917.16(i). A portion of the required amendment resulted from OSM’s decision on June 9, 1993, to not approve proposed changes to 405 Kentucky Administrative Regulations (KAR) 16:200 sections 1(7)(a), (7)(a)1 through 5, 1(7)(b), and 1(7)(d) (58 FR 32283). The finding stated, in part, that Kentucky (unlike other States) had not submitted any administrative record information to demonstrate that its proposed practices were normal husbandry practices within Kentucky.

Kentucky has now submitted examples of common husbandry practices “that would be encountered on lands in Kentucky and would not restart or extend the bond liability period.” The examples pertain to the following categories of lands: hayland or pasture; forestland, commercial forestry, or fish and wildlife; and commercial, industrial, residential, or recreational. Kentucky references materials from the Kentucky College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service and the University of Kentucky, as well as practices recognized by other regulatory agencies. It notes that the University of Kentucky’s ongoing research could lead to improved silvicultural and agricultural production which may result in future changes to husbandry practices.

We will review the information that Kentucky has submitted to determine if the practices meet the criteria identified in the notice. If the practices meet the requirements, we will approve the previously disapproved provisions and
remove the required amendment at 30 CFR 917.16(i).

The full text of the submission is available for you to read at the locations listed above under ADDRESSES.

III. Public Comment Procedures

Under the provisions of 30 CFR 732.17(h), we are seeking your comments on whether the submission satisfies the applicable program approval criteria of 30 CFR 732.15. If we approve the submission, it will become part of the program.

Written Comments

Send your written comments to OSM at the address given above. Your written comments should be specific, pertain only to the issues proposed in this rulemaking, and include explanations in support of your recommendations. In the final rulemaking, we will not consider or include in the administrative record any comments received after the time indicated under DATES or at locations other than the Lexington Field Office.

Electronic Comments

Please submit Internet comments as an ASCII file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include “Attn: KY–248–FOR/Administrative Record No. KY–1634” and your name and return address in your Internet message. If you do not receive a confirmation that we have received your Internet message, contact the Lexington Field Office at (850) 260-8400.

Availability of Comments

We will make comments, including names and addresses of respondents, available for public review during normal business hours. We will not consider anonymous comments. If individual respondents request confidentiality, we will honor their request to the extent allowable by law. Individual respondents who wish to withhold their name or address from public review, except for the city or town, must state this prominently at the beginning of their comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public review in their entirety.

Public Hearing

If you wish to speak at the public hearing, contact the person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT by 4 p.m., e.s.t. on September 29, 2004. If you are disabled and need special accommodations to attend a public hearing, contact the person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT. We will arrange the location and time of the hearing with those persons requesting the hearing. If no one requests an opportunity to speak, we will not hold the hearing. To assist the transcriber and ensure an accurate record, we request, if possible, that each person who speaks at a public hearing provide us with a written copy of his or her comments. The public hearing will continue on the specified date until everyone scheduled to speak has been given an opportunity to be heard. If you are in the audience and have not been scheduled to speak and wish to do so, you will be allowed to speak after those who have been scheduled. We will end the hearing after everyone scheduled to speak and others present in the audience who wish to speak, have been heard.

Public Meeting

If only one person requests an opportunity to speak, we may hold a public meeting rather than a public hearing. If you wish to meet with us to discuss the submission, please request a meeting by contacting the person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT. All such meetings are open to the public and, if possible, we will post notices of meetings at the locations listed under ADDRESSES. We will make a written summary of each meeting a part of the administrative record.

IV. 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 regulations.

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, to the extent allowable by law, 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 since each such 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(b)(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. 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. The basis for this determination is that our decision is on a State regulatory program and does not involve a Federal program involving 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
Section 702(d) of SMCRA (30 U.S.C. 1292(d)) provides that a decision on a proposed State regulatory program provision does not constitute a major Federal action within the meaning of section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)). A determination has been made that such decisions are categorically excluded from the NEPA process (516 DM 8.4.A).

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 has determined 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 that 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. Accordingly, this rule will ensure that existing requirements previously promulgated by OSM will be implemented by the State. 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, geographic regions, or Federal, State or local governmental agencies; 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 a cost of $100 million or more in any given year on any governmental entity or the private sector.

List of Subjects in 30 CFR Part 917
Intergovernmental relations, Surface mining, Underground mining.


Brent Wahliquist, Regional Director, Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
30 CFR Part 946

[VA–121–FOR]

Virginia Regulatory Program
AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM), Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule; public comment period and opportunity for public hearing on proposed amendments.

SUMMARY: We are announcing receipt of a proposed amendment to the Virginia regulatory program under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA or the Act). The program amendment revises Virginia’s Coal Surface Mining Reclamation Regulations concerning performance bonds furnished pursuant to the Coal Surface Mining Reclamation (Pool Bond) Fund. The amendment is intended to conform the performance bond release procedures that are applied to Virginia’s “alternative bonding system” with bond release procedures used for other performance bonds. The amendment is also intended to clarify language regarding minimum bond amounts set for permits.

DATES: We will accept written comments on this amendment until 4 p.m. (local time), on October 14, 2004. If requested, we will hold a public hearing on the amendment on October 9, 2004. We will accept requests to speak at hearing until 4 p.m. (local time), on September 29, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by VA–121–FOR, by any of the following methods:

• Mail/Hand Delivery: Mr. Robert A. Penn, Director, Big Stone Gap Field Office, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, 1941 Neeley Road, Suite 201, Compartment 116, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219.
• Federal eRulemaking Portal: http://www.regulations.gov. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the agency docket number for this rulemaking. For detailed instructions on submitting comments and additional information on the rulemaking process, see the “Public Comment Procedures” heading in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section of this document. You may also request to speak at a public hearing by any of the methods listed above or by contacting the individual listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Robert A. Penn, Director, Big Stone Gap Field Office, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, 1941 Neeley Road, Suite 201, Compartment 116, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219, Telephone: (540) 523–4303. E-mail: rpen@osmre.gov.

Mr. Leslie S. Vincent, Virginia Division of Mines and Minerals, P.O. Drawer 900, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219, Telephone: (540) 523–8100. E-mail: lsv@mme.state.va.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
I. Background on the Virginia Program
II. Description of the Proposed Amendment
III. Public Comment Procedures
IV. Procedural Determinations

I. Background on the Virginia 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 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 the Act; and rules and regulations consistent