

State any surface coal mining operations unless such person has first obtained a permit issued by such State pursuant to an approved State program or by the Secretary pursuant to a Federal program; except a person conducting surface coal mining operations under a permit from the State regulatory authority, issued in accordance with the provisions of section 1252 of this title, may conduct such operations beyond such period if an application for a permit has been filed in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, but the initial administrative decision has not been rendered.

(b) Term

All permits issued pursuant to the requirements of this chapter shall be issued for a term not to exceed five years: *Provided*, That if the applicant demonstrates that a specified longer term is reasonably needed to allow the applicant to obtain necessary financing for equipment and the opening of the operation and if the application is full and complete for such specified longer term, the regulatory authority may grant a permit for such longer term. A successor in interest to a permittee who applies for a new permit within thirty days of succeeding to such interest and who is able to obtain the bond coverage of the original permittee may continue surface coal mining and reclamation operations according to the approved mining and reclamation plan of the original permittee until such successor's application is granted or denied.

(c) Termination

A permit shall terminate if the permittee has not commenced the surface coal mining operations covered by such permit within three years of the issuance of the permit: *Provided*, That the regulatory authority may grant reasonable extensions of time upon a showing that such extensions are necessary by reason of litigation precluding such commencement or threatening substantial economic loss to the permittee, or by reason of conditions beyond the control and without the fault or negligence of the permittee: *Provided further*, That in the case of a coal lease issued under the Federal Mineral Leasing Act, as amended [30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.], extensions of time may not extend beyond the period allowed for diligent development in accordance with section 7 of that Act [30 U.S.C. 207]: *Provided further*, That with respect to coal to be mined for use in a synthetic fuel facility or specific major electric generating facility, the permittee shall be deemed to have commenced surface mining operations at such time as the construction of the synthetic fuel or generating facility is initiated.

(d) Renewal

(1) Any valid permit issued pursuant to this chapter shall carry with it the right of successive renewal upon expiration with respect to areas within the boundaries of the existing permit. The holders of the permit may apply for renewal and such renewal shall be issued (provided that on application for renewal the burden shall be on the opponents of renewal), subsequent to fulfillment of the public notice requirements of sections 1263 and 1264 of this title unless it is established that and written findings by the regulatory authority are made that—

(A) the terms and conditions of the existing permit are not being satisfactorily met;

(B) the present surface coal mining and reclamation operation is not in compliance with the environmental protection standards of this chapter and the approved State plan or Federal program pursuant to this chapter; or

(C) the renewal requested substantially jeopardizes the operator's continuing responsibility on existing permit areas;

(D) the operator has not provided evidence that the performance bond in effect for said operation will continue in full force and effect for any renewal requested in such application as well as any additional bond the regulatory authority might require pursuant to section 1259 of this title; or

(E) any additional revised or updated information required by the regulatory authority has not been provided. Prior to the approval of any renewal of permit the regulatory authority shall provide notice to the appropriate public authorities.

(2) If an application for renewal of a valid permit includes a proposal to extend the mining operation beyond the boundaries authorized in the existing permit, the portion of the application for renewal of a valid permit which addresses any new land areas shall be subject to the full standards applicable to new applications under this chapter: *Provided, however*, That if the surface coal mining operations authorized by a permit issued pursuant to this chapter were not subject to the standards contained in section 1260(b)(5)(A) and (B) of this title by reason of complying with the proviso of section 1260(b)(5) of this title, then the portion of the application for renewal of the permit which addresses any new land areas previously identified in the reclamation plan submitted pursuant to section 1258 of this title shall not be subject to the standards contained in section 1260(b)(5)(A) and (B) of this title.

(3) Any permit renewal shall be for a term not to exceed the period of the original permit established by this chapter. Application for permit renewal shall be made at least one hundred and twenty days prior to the expiration of the valid permit.

(Pub. L. 95-87, title V, § 506, Aug. 3, 1977, 91 Stat. 473.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Federal Mineral Leasing Act, as amended, referred to in subsec. (c), probably means act Feb. 25, 1920, ch. 85, 41 Stat. 437, known as the Mineral Leasing Act, which is classified generally to chapter 3A (§181 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 181 of this title and Tables.

§ 1257. Application requirements

(a) Fee

Each application for a surface coal mining and reclamation permit pursuant to an approved State program or a Federal program under the provisions of this chapter shall be accompanied by a fee as determined by the regulatory author-

ity. Such fee may be less than but shall not exceed the actual or anticipated cost of reviewing, administering, and enforcing such permit issued pursuant to a State or Federal program. The regulatory authority may develop procedures so as to enable the cost of the fee to be paid over the term of the permit.

(b) Submittal; contents

The permit application shall be submitted in a manner satisfactory to the regulatory authority and shall contain, among other things—

(1) the names and addresses of (A) the permit applicant; (B) every legal owner of record of the property (surface and mineral), to be mined; (C) the holders of record of any leasehold interest in the property; (D) any purchaser of record of the property under a real estate contract; and (E) the operator if he is a person different from the applicant; and (F) if any of these are business entities other than a single proprietor, the names and addresses of the principals, officers, and resident agent;

(2) the names and addresses of the owners of record of all surface and subsurface areas adjacent to any part of the permit area;

(3) a statement of any current or previous surface coal mining permits in the United States held by the applicant and the permit identification and each pending application;

(4) if the applicant is a partnership, corporation, association, or other business entity, the following where applicable: the names and addresses of every officer, partner, director, or person performing a function similar to a director, of the applicant, together with the name and address of any person owning, of record 10 per centum or more of any class of voting stock of the applicant and a list of all names under which the applicant, partner, or principal shareholder previously operated a surface mining operation within the United States within the five-year period preceding the date of submission of the application;

(5) a statement of whether the applicant, any subsidiary, affiliate, or persons controlled by or under common control with the applicant, has ever held a Federal or State mining permit which in the five-year period prior to the date of submission of the application has been suspended or revoked or has had a mining bond or similar security deposited in lieu of bond forfeited¹ and, if so, a brief explanation of the facts involved;

(6) a copy of the applicant's advertisement to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the locality of the proposed site at least once a week for four successive weeks, and which includes the ownership, a description of the exact location and boundaries of the proposed site sufficient so that the proposed operation is readily locatable by local residents, and the location of where the application is available for public inspection;

(7) a description of the type and method of coal mining operation that exists or is proposed, the engineering techniques proposed or used, and the equipment used or proposed to be used;

(8) the anticipated or actual starting and termination dates of each phase of the mining operation and number of acres of land to be affected;

(9) the applicant shall file with the regulatory authority on an accurate map or plan, to an appropriate scale, clearly showing the land to be affected as of the date of the application, the area of land within the permit area upon which the applicant has the legal right to enter and commence surface mining operations and shall provide to the regulatory authority a statement of those documents upon which the applicant bases his legal right to enter and commence surface mining operations on the area affected, and whether that right is the subject of pending court litigation: *Provided*, That nothing in this chapter shall be construed as vesting in the regulatory authority the jurisdiction to adjudicate property title disputes.²

(10) the name of the watershed and location of the surface stream or tributary into which surface and pit drainage will be discharged;

(11) a determination of the probable hydrologic consequences of the mining and reclamation operations, both on and off the mine site, with respect to the hydrologic regime, quantity and quality of water in surface and ground water systems including the dissolved and suspended solids under seasonal flow conditions and the collection of sufficient data for the mine site and surrounding areas so that an assessment can be made by the regulatory authority of the probable cumulative impacts of all anticipated mining in the area upon the hydrology of the area and particularly upon water availability: *Provided, however*, That this determination shall not be required until such time as hydrologic information on the general area prior to mining is made available from an appropriate Federal or State agency: *Provided further*, That the permit shall not be approved until such information is available and is incorporated into the application;

(12) when requested by the regulatory authority, the climatological factors that are peculiar to the locality of the land to be affected, including the average seasonal precipitation, the average direction and velocity of prevailing winds, and the seasonal temperature ranges;

(13) accurate maps to an appropriate scale clearly showing (A) the land to be affected as of the date of application and (B) all types of information set forth on topographical maps of the United States Geological Survey of a scale of 1:24,000 or 1:25,000 or larger, including all manmade features and significant known archeological sites existing on the date of application. Such a map or plan shall among other things specified by the regulatory authority show all boundaries of the land to be affected, the boundary lines and names of present owners of record of all surface areas abutting the permit area, and the location of all buildings within one thousand feet of the permit area;

(14) cross-section maps or plans of the land to be affected including the actual area to be

¹ So in original. Probably should be "forfeited".

² So in original. The period probably should be a semicolon.

mined, prepared by or under the direction of and certified by a qualified registered professional engineer, or professional geologist with assistance from experts in related fields such as land surveying and landscape architecture, showing pertinent elevation and location of test borings or core samplings and depicting the following information: the nature and depth of the various strata of overburden; the location of subsurface water, if encountered, and its quality; the nature and thickness of any coal or rider seam above the coal seam to be mined; the nature of the stratum immediately beneath the coal seam to be mined; all mineral crop lines and the strike and dip of the coal to be mined, within the area of land to be affected; existing or previous surface mining limits; the location and extent of known workings of any underground mines, including mine openings to the surface; the location of aquifers; the estimated elevation of the water table; the location of spoil, waste, or refuse areas and top-soil preservation areas; the location of all impoundments for waste or erosion control; any settling or water treatment facility; constructed or natural drainways and the location of any discharges to any surface body of water on the area of land to be affected or adjacent thereto; and profiles at appropriate cross sections of the anticipated final surface configuration that will be achieved pursuant to the operator's proposed reclamation plan;

(15) a statement of the result of test borings or core samplings from the permit area, including logs of the drill holes; the thickness of the coal seam found, an analysis of the chemical properties of such coal; the sulfur content of any coal seam; chemical analysis of potentially acid or toxic forming sections of the overburden; and chemical analysis of the stratum lying immediately underneath the coal to be mined except that the provisions of this paragraph (15) may be waived by the regulatory authority with respect to the specific application by a written determination that such requirements are unnecessary;

(16) for those lands in the permit application which a reconnaissance inspection suggests may be prime farm lands, a soil survey shall be made or obtained according to standards established by the Secretary of Agriculture in order to confirm the exact location of such prime farm lands, if any; and

(17) information pertaining to coal seams, test borings, core samplings, or soil samples as required by this section shall be made available to any person with an interest which is or may be adversely affected: *Provided*, That information which pertains only to the analysis of the chemical and physical properties of the coal (excepting information regarding such mineral or elemental content which is potentially toxic in the environment) shall be kept confidential and not made a matter of public record.

(c) Assistance to small coal operators

(1) If the regulatory authority finds that the probable total annual production at all locations of a coal surface mining operator will not

exceed 300,000 tons, the cost of the following activities, which shall be performed by a qualified public or private laboratory or such other public or private qualified entity designated by the regulatory authority, shall be assumed by the regulatory authority upon the written request of the operator in connection with a permit application:

(A) The determination of probable hydrologic consequences required by subsection (b)(11), including the engineering analyses and designs necessary for the determination.

(B) The development of cross-section maps and plans required by subsection (b)(14).

(C) The geologic drilling and statement of results of test borings and core samplings required by subsection (b)(15).

(D) The collection of archaeological information required by subsection (b)(13) and any other archaeological and historical information required by the regulatory authority, and the preparation of plans necessitated thereby.

(E) Pre-blast surveys required by section 1265(b)(15)(E) of this title.

(F) The collection of site-specific resource information and production of protection and enhancement plans for fish and wildlife habitats and other environmental values required by the regulatory authority under this chapter.

(2) The Secretary shall provide or assume the cost of training coal operators that meet the qualifications stated in paragraph (1) concerning the preparation of permit applications and compliance with the regulatory program, and shall ensure that qualified coal operators are aware of the assistance available under this subsection.

(d) Reclamation plan

Each applicant for a permit shall be required to submit to the regulatory authority as part of the permit application a reclamation plan which shall meet the requirements of this chapter.

(e) Public inspection

Each applicant for a surface coal mining and reclamation permit shall file a copy of his application for public inspection with the recorder at the courthouse of the county or an appropriate public office approved by the regulatory authority where the mining is proposed to occur, except for that information pertaining to the coal seam itself.

(f) Insurance certificate

Each applicant for a permit shall be required to submit to the regulatory authority as part of the permit application a certificate issued by an insurance company authorized to do business in the United States certifying that the applicant has a public liability insurance policy in force for the surface mining and reclamation operations for which such permit is sought, or evidence that the applicant has satisfied other State or Federal self-insurance requirements. Such policy shall provide for personal injury and property damage protection in an amount adequate to compensate any persons damaged as a result of surface coal mining and reclamation operations including use of explosives and entitled to compensation under the applicable provisions of State law. Such policy shall be main-

tained in full force and effect during the terms of the permit or any renewal, including the length of all reclamation operations.

(g) Blasting plan

Each applicant for a surface coal mining and reclamation permit shall submit to the regulatory authority as part of the permit application a blasting plan which shall outline the procedures and standards by which the operator will meet the provisions of section 1265(b)(15) of this title.

(h) Reimbursement of costs

A coal operator that has received assistance pursuant to subsection (c)(1) or (2) shall reimburse the regulatory authority for the cost of the services rendered if the program administrator finds that the operator's actual and attributed annual production of coal for all locations exceeds 300,000 tons during the 12 months immediately following the date on which the operator is issued the surface coal mining and reclamation permit.

(Pub. L. 95-87, title V, § 507, Aug. 3, 1977, 91 Stat. 474; Pub. L. 101-508, title VI, § 6011, Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1388-297; Pub. L. 102-486, title XXV, § 2513, Oct. 24, 1992, 106 Stat. 3112.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1992—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 102-486, § 2513(a), amended subsec. (c) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (c) read as follows: “If the regulatory authority finds that the probable total annual production at all locations of any coal surface mining operator will not exceed 300,000 tons, the determination of probable hydrologic consequences required by subsection (b)(11) of this section and the statement of the result of test borings or core samplings required by subsection (b)(15) of this section shall, upon the written request of the operator be performed by a qualified public or private laboratory designated by the regulatory authority and the cost of the preparation of such determination and statement shall be assumed by the regulatory authority.”

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 102-486, § 2513(b), added subsec. (h).

1990—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 101-508 substituted “300,000” for “100,000”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-508, effective Oct. 1, 1991, see section 6014 of Pub. L. 101-508 set out as a note under section 1231 of this title.

DISCRETIONARY OFFSETTING COLLECTIONS

Pub. L. 113-76, div. G, title I, Jan. 17, 2014, 128 Stat. 299, provided in part: “That, in subsequent fiscal years [after fiscal year 2014], all amounts collected by the Office of Surface Mining from permit fees pursuant to section 507 of Public Law 95-87 (30 U.S.C. 1257) shall be credited to this account [OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT—REGULATION AND TECHNOLOGY] as discretionary offsetting collections, to remain available until expended.”

Similar provisions were contained in the following appropriations acts:

Pub. L. 118-42, div. E, title I, Mar. 9, 2024, 138 Stat. 229.

Pub. L. 117-328, div. G, title I, Dec. 29, 2022, 136 Stat. 4770.

Pub. L. 117-103, div. G, title I, Mar. 15, 2022, 136 Stat. 359.

Pub. L. 116-260, div. G, title I, Dec. 27, 2020, 134 Stat. 1489.

Pub. L. 116-94, div. D, title I, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 2697.

Pub. L. 116-6, div. E, title I, Feb. 15, 2019, 133 Stat. 216.

Pub. L. 115-141, div. G, title I, Mar. 23, 2018, 132 Stat. 645.

Pub. L. 115-31, div. G, title I, May 5, 2017, 131 Stat. 446.

Pub. L. 114-113, div. G, title I, Dec. 18, 2015, 129 Stat. 2536.

Pub. L. 113-235, div. F, title I, Dec. 16, 2014, 128 Stat. 2406.

Pub. L. 112-74, div. E, title I, Dec. 23, 2011, 125 Stat. 996.

PREPARATION OF CROSS-SECTIONS, MAPS, AND PLANS OF LAND BY OR UNDER DIRECTION OF QUALIFIED REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, GEOLOGISTS, OR LAND SURVEYORS

Pub. L. 98-146, title I, § 115, Nov. 4, 1983, 97 Stat. 938, provided that: “Notwithstanding section 507(b)(14) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-87) [subsec. (b)(14) of this section], cross-sections, maps or plans of land to be affected by an application for a surface mining and reclamation permit shall be prepared by or under the direction of a qualified registered professional engineer or geologist, or qualified registered professional land surveyor in any State which authorizes land surveyors to prepare and certify such maps or plans.”

§ 1258. Reclamation plan requirements

(a) Each reclamation plan submitted as part of a permit application pursuant to any approved State program or a Federal program under the provisions of this chapter shall include, in the degree of detail necessary to demonstrate that reclamation required by the State or Federal program can be accomplished, a statement of:

(1) the identification of the lands subject to surface coal mining operations over the estimated life of those operations and the size, sequence, and timing of the subareas for which it is anticipated that individual permits for mining will be sought;

(2) the condition of the land to be covered by the permit prior to any mining including:

(A) the uses existing at the time of the application, and if the land has a history of previous mining, the uses which preceded any mining; and

(B) the capability of the land prior to any mining to support a variety of uses giving consideration to soil and foundation characteristics, topography, and vegetative cover, and, if applicable, a soil survey prepared pursuant to section 1257(b)(16) of this title; and

(C) the productivity of the land prior to mining, including appropriate classification as prime farm lands, as well as the average yield of food, fiber, forage, or wood products from such lands obtained under high levels of management;

(3) the use which is proposed to be made of the land following reclamation, including a discussion of the utility and capacity of the reclaimed land to support a variety of alternative uses and the relationship of such use to existing land use policies and plans, and the comments of any owner of the surface, State and local governments or agencies thereof which would have to initiate, implement, approve or authorize the proposed use of the land following reclamation;