SURFACE MINING AND RECLAMATION ACT

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SURFACE MINING AND RECLAMATION ACT OF 1975

As amended by:

Senate Bill 1300, Nejedly - 1980 Statutes Senate Bill 614, Craven et al - 1995 Statutes
Assembly Bill 110, Areias - 1984 Statutes Assembly Bill 1373, Olberg - 1996 Statutes
Senate Bill 593, Royce - 1985 Statutes Senate Bill 1549, Monteith - 1996 Statutes
Senate Bill 1261, Seymour - 1986 Statutes Senate Bill 1664, Sher - 1997 Statutes
Assembly Bill 747, Sher - 1987 Statutes Assembly Bill 297, Thomson - 1999 Statutes
Assembly Bill 3551, Sher - 1990 Statutes Senate Bill 244, Solis - 2000 Statutes
Assembly Bill 3903, Sher - 1990 Statutes Senate Bill 666, Sher - 2000 Statutes
Assembly Bill 1506, Sher - 1991 Statutes Senate Bill 483, Sher - 2002 Statutes
Senate Bill 1569, Rogers - 1992 Statutes Senate Bill 22, Sher - 2003 Statutes
Assembly Bill 3098, Sher - 1992 Statutes Senate Bill 649, Kuehl - 2003 Statutes
Assembly Bill 723, Sher - 1993 Statutes Assembly Bill 1984, Wolk - 2004 Statutes
Assembly Bill 904, Sher - 1993 Statutes Senate Bill 71 - 2005 Statutes
Assembly Bill 867, Sher - 1994 Statutes Senate Bill 1110 - 2005 Statutes
Senate Bill 273, Leslie - 1995 Statutes Senate Bill 668, Kuehl - 2006 Statutes
Senate Bill 833, Committee on Natural Resources and Water – 2009 Statutes
Senate Bill 133, Wolk – 2011 Statutes

Article 1. General Provisions

§ 2710. This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975.

§ 2711. (a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that the extraction of minerals is essential to the continued economic well-being of the state and to the needs of the society, and that the reclamation of mined lands is necessary to prevent or minimize adverse effects on the environment and to protect the public health and safety.
(b) The Legislature further finds that the reclamation of mined lands as provided in this chapter will permit the continued mining of minerals and will provide for the protection and subsequent beneficial use of the mined and reclaimed land.
(c) The Legislature further finds that surface mining takes place in diverse areas where the geologic, topographic, climatic, biological, and social conditions are significantly different and that reclamation operations and the specifications therefore may vary accordingly.

§ 2712. It is the intent of the Legislature to create and maintain an effective and comprehensive surface mining and reclamation policy with regulation of surface mining operations so as to assure that:
(a) Adverse environmental effects are prevented or minimized and that mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition which is readily adaptable for alternative land uses.
(b) The production and conservation of minerals are encouraged, while giving consideration to values relating to recreation, watershed, wildlife, range and forage, and aesthetic enjoyment.
(c) Residual hazards to the public health and safety are eliminated.

§ 2713. It is not the intent of the Legislature by the enactment of this chapter to take private property for public use without payment of just compensation in violation of the California and United States Constitutions.

§ 2714. This chapter does not apply to any of the following activities: (a) Excavations or grading conducted for farming or the immediate excavation or grading of lands affected by a flood or natural disaster for the purpose of restoring those lands to their prior condition. (b) Onsite excavation and onsite earthmoving activities that are an integral and necessary part of a construction project and that are undertaken to prepare a site for construction of structures, landscaping, or other land improvements associated with those structures, including the related excavation, grading, compaction, or the

creation of fills, road cuts, and embankments, whether or not surplus materials are exported from the site, subject to all of the following conditions:

(1) All required permits for the construction, landscaping, or related land improvements have been approved by a public agency in accordance with applicable provisions of state law and locally adopted plans and ordinances, including, but not limited to, Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000).

(2) The lead agency's approval of the construction project included consideration of the onsite excavation and onsite earthmoving activities pursuant to Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000).

(3) The approved construction project is consistent with the general plan or zoning of the site.

(4) Surplus materials shall not be exported from the site unless and until actual construction work has commenced and shall cease if it is determined that construction activities have terminated, have been indefinitely suspended, or are no longer being actively pursued.

(c) Operation of a plant site used for mineral processing, including associated onsite structures, equipment, machines, tools, or other materials, including the onsite stockpiling and onsite recovery of mined materials, subject to all of the following conditions:

(1) The plant site is located on lands designated for industrial or commercial uses in the applicable county or city general plan.

(2) The plant site is located on lands zoned industrial or commercial, or are contained within a zoning category intended exclusively for industrial activities by the applicable city or county.

(3) None of the minerals being processed are being extracted onsite.

(4) All reclamation work has been completed pursuant to the approved reclamation plan for any mineral extraction activities that occurred onsite after January 1, 1976.

(d) Prospecting for, or the extraction of, minerals for commercial purposes where the removal of overburden or mineral product total less than 1,000 cubic yards in any one location, and the total surface area disturbed is less than one acre.

(e) Surface mining operations that are required by federal law in order to protect a mining claim, if those operations are conducted solely for that purpose.

(f) Any other surface mining operations that the board, as defined by Section 2001, determines to be of an infrequent nature and which involve only minor surface disturbances.

(g) The solar evaporation of sea water or bay water for the production of salt and related minerals.

(h) Emergency excavations or grading conducted by the Department of Water Resources or the Reclamation Board for the purpose of averting, alleviating, repairing, or restoring damage to property due to imminent or recent floods, disasters, or other emergencies.

(i) (1) Surface mining operations conducted on lands owned or leased, or upon which easements or rights-of-way have been obtained, by the Department of Water Resources for the purpose of the State Water Resources Development System or flood control, and surface mining operations on lands owned or leased, or upon which easements or rights-of-way have been obtained, by the Reclamation Board for the purpose of flood control, if the Department of Water Resources adopts, after submission to and consultation with, the Department of Conservation, a reclamation plan for lands affected by these activities, and those lands are reclaimed in conformance with the standards specified in regulations of the board adopted pursuant to this chapter. The Department of Water Resources shall provide an annual report to the Department of Conservation by the date specified by the Department of Conservation on these mining activities.

(2) Nothing in this subdivision shall require the Department of Water Resources or the Reclamation Board to obtain a permit or secure approval of a reclamation plan from any city or county in order to conduct surface mining operations specified in paragraph (1). Nothing in this subdivision shall preclude the bringing of an enforcement action pursuant to Section 2774.1, if it is determined that a surface mine operator, acting under contract with the Department of Water Resources or the Reclamation Board on lands other than those owned or leased, or upon which easements or rights-of-way have been obtained, by the Department of Water Resources or the Reclamation Board, is otherwise not in compliance with this chapter.

(j) (1) Excavations or grading for the exclusive purpose of obtaining materials for roadbed construction and maintenance conducted in connection with timber operations or forest management on land owned by the same person or entity. This exemption is limited to excavation and grading that is conducted adjacent to timber operation or forest management roads and shall not apply to onsite excavation or grading that occurs within 100 feet of a Class One watercourse or 75 feet of a Class Two watercourse, or to excavation for materials that are, or have been, sold for commercial purposes.

(2) This exemption shall be available only if slope

stability and erosion are controlled in accordance with subdivision (f) of Section 3704 and subdivision (d) of Section 3706 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations and, upon closure of the site, the person closing the site implements, where necessary, revegetation measures and postclosure uses in consultation with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

(k) Excavations, grading, or other earthmoving activities in an oil or gas field that are integral to, and necessary for, ongoing operations for the extraction of oil or gas that comply with all of the following conditions:

(1) The operations are being conducted in accordance with Division 3 (commencing with Section 3000).

(2) The operations are consistent with any general plan or zoning applicable to the site.

(3) The earthmoving activities are within oil or gas field properties under a common owner or operator.

(4) No excavated materials are sold for commercial purposes.

§ 2715. No provision of this chapter or any ruling, requirement, or policy of the board is a limitation on any of the following:

(a) On the police power of any city or county or on the power of any city or county to declare, prohibit, and abate nuisances.

(b) On the power of the Attorney General, at the request of the board, or upon his own motion, to bring an action in the name of the people of the State of California to enjoin any pollution or nuisance.

(c) On the power of any state agency in the enforcement or administration of any provision of law which it is specifically authorized or required to enforce or administer.

(d) On the right of any person to maintain at any time any appropriate action for relief against any private nuisance as defined in Part 3 (commencing with Section 3479) of Division 4 of the Civil Code or for any other private relief.

(e) On the power of any lead agency to adopt policies, standards, or regulations imposing additional requirements on any person if the requirements do not prevent the person from complying with the provisions of this chapter.

(f) On the power of any city or county to regulate the use of buildings, structures, and land as between industry, business, residents, open space (including agriculture, recreation, the enjoyment of scenic beauty, and the use of natural resources), and other purposes.

§ 2715.5. (a) The Cache Creek Resource Management Plan, in conjunction with a site specific plan deemed consistent by the lead agency with the Cache Creek Resource Management Plan, until December 31, 2017, shall be considered to be a functional equivalent of a reclamation plan for the purposes of this chapter. No other reclamation plan shall be required to be reviewed and approved for any excavation project subject to the Cache Creek Resource Management Plan that is conducted in conformance with an approved site specific plan that is consistent with the Cache Creek Resource Management Plan, and the standards specified in that plan governing erosion control, channel stabilization, habitat restoration, flood control, or infrastructure maintenance, if that plan is reviewed and approved by a lead agency pursuant to this chapter.

(b) For purposes of this section, the board of supervisors of the county in which the Cache Creek Resource Management Plan is to be implemented shall prepare and file the annual report required to be prepared pursuant to Section 2207.

(c) Nothing in this section precludes an enforcement action by the board or the department brought pursuant to this chapter or Section 2207 if the lead agency or the director determines that a surface mining operator, acting under the authority of the Cache Creek Resource Management Plan, is not in compliance with the requirements of this chapter or Section 2207.

(d) ‘‘Site specific plan,’’ for the purposes of this section, means an individual project plan approved by the lead agency that is consistent with the Cache Creek Resource Management Plan. Site specific plans prepared in conformance with the Cache Creek Resource Management Plan shall, at a minimum, include the information required pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 2772, shall comply with the requirements of Article 9 (commencing with Section 3700) of Subchapter 1 of Chapter 8 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations and shall be provided along with a financial assurance estimate to the department for review and comment pursuant to Section 2774. Notwithstanding the number of days authorized by paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Section 2774, the department shall review the site specific plan and the financial assurance estimate and prepare any written comments within 15 days from the date of receipt of the plan and the estimate.

(e) Prior to engaging in an excavation activity in conformance with the Cache Creek Resource Management Plan, a surface mining operation shall be required to obtain financial assurances that meet the

requirements of Section 2773.1.
(f) This section shall not become operative until the date the State Mining and Geology Board notifies the Secretary of State in writing that the board has approved an ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors for the County of Yolo that governs in-channel noncommercial extraction activities carried out pursuant to the Cache Creek Resources Management Plan.
(g) This section shall remain in effect only until December 31, 2017, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute that is enacted before December 31, 2017, deletes or extends that date.

§ 2716. (a) Any interested person may commence an action on his or her own behalf against the board, the lead agency, the State Geologist, or the director for a writ of mandate pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 1084) of Title 1 of Part 3 of the Code of Civil Procedure to compel the board, the State Geologist, or the director to carry out any duty imposed upon them pursuant to this chapter.
(b) For purposes of this section, "person" means an individual, firm, association, corporation, organization, or partnership, or a city, county, district, or the state or any department or agency of the state.

§ 2717. (a) The board shall submit to the Legislature on December 1st of each year a report on the actions taken pursuant to this chapter during the preceding fiscal year. The report shall include a statement of the actions, including legislative recommendations, that are necessary to carry out more completely the purposes and requirements of this chapter.
(b) For purposes of ensuring compliance with Sections 10295.5 and 20676 of the Public Contract Code, the department shall, at a minimum, quarterly publish in the California Regulatory Notice Register, or otherwise make available upon request to the Department of General Services or any other state or local agency, a list identifying all of the following:
(1) Surface mining operations for which a report has been submitted pursuant to Section 2207 that indicates all of following:
(A) The reclamation plan and the financial assurances have been approved pursuant to this chapter.
(B) Compliance with state reclamation standards developed pursuant to Section 2773.
(C) Compliance with the financial assurance guidelines developed pursuant to Section 2773.1.
(D) The annual reporting fee has been submitted to the Department of Conservation.
(2) Surface mining operations for which an appeal is pending before the board pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 2770, provided that the appeal shall not have been pending before the board for more than 180 days.
(3) Surface mining operations for which an inspection is required and for which an inspection notice has been submitted by the lead agency pursuant to Section 2774 that indicates both compliance with the approved reclamation plan and that sufficient financial assurances, pursuant to Section 2773.1, have been approved and secured.

§ 2718. If any provision of this chapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the chapter which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this chapter are severable.

§ 2719. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, neither the state nor any county, city, district, or other political subdivision shall be exempt from any fee imposed upon a mining operation pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 2207.

Article 2. Definitions

§ 2725. Unless the context otherwise requires, the definitions set forth in this article shall govern the construction of this chapter.

§ 2726. "Area of regional significance" means an area designated by the Board pursuant to Section 2790 which is known to contain a deposit of minerals, the extraction of which is judged to be of prime importance in meeting future needs for minerals in a particular region of the state within which the minerals are located and which, if prematurely developed for alternate incompatible land uses, could result in the permanent loss of minerals that are of more than local significance.

§ 2727. "Area of statewide significance" means an area designated by the board pursuant to Section 2790 which is known to contain a deposit of minerals, the extraction of which is judged to be of prime importance in meeting future needs for minerals in the state and which, if prematurely developed for alternate incompatible land uses, could result in the permanent loss of minerals that are of more than local or regional significance.

§ 2727.1 “Idle” means to curtail for a period of one year or more surface mining operations by more than 90 percent of the operation's previous maximum annual mineral production, with the intent to resume those surface mining operations at a future date.

§ 2728. “Lead agency” means the city, county, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, or the board which has the principal responsibility for approving a reclamation plan pursuant to this chapter.

§ 2729. “Mined lands” includes the surface, subsurface, and ground water of an area in which surface mining operations will be, are being, or have been conducted, including private ways and roads appurtenant to any such area, land excavations, workings, mining waste, and areas in which structures, facilities, equipment, machines, tools, or other materials or property which result from, or are used in, surface mining operations are located.

§ 2730. “Mining waste” includes the residual of soil, rock, mineral, liquid, vegetation, equipment, machines, tools, or other materials or property directly resulting from, or displaced by, surface mining operations.

§ 2731. “Operator” means any person who is engaged in surface mining operations, himself, or who contracts with others to conduct operations on his behalf, except a person who is engaged in surface mining operations as an employee with wages as his sole compensation.

§ 2732. “Overburden” means soil, rock, or other materials that lie above a natural mineral deposit or in between mineral deposits, before or after their removal by surface mining operations.

§ 2732.5. “Permit” means any authorization from, or approval by, a lead agency, the absence of which would preclude surface mining operations.

§ 2733. “Reclamation” means the combined process of land treatment that minimizes water degradation, air pollution, damage to aquatic or wildlife habitat, flooding, erosion, and other adverse effects from surface mining operations, including adverse surface effects incidental to underground mines, so that mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition which is readily adaptable for alternate land uses and create no danger to public health or safety. The process may extend to affected lands surrounding mined lands, and may require backfilling, grading, resoiling, revegetation, soil compaction, stabilization, or other measures.

§ 2734. “State policy” means the regulations adopted by the board pursuant to Section 2755.

§ 2735. “Surface mining operations” means all, or any part of, the process involved in the mining of minerals on mined lands by removing overburden and mining directly from the mineral deposits, open-pit mining of minerals naturally exposed, mining by the auger method, dredging and quarrying, or surface work incident to an underground mine. Surface mining operations shall include, but are not limited to:

(a) Inplace distillation or retorting or leaching.
(b) The production and disposal of mining waste.
(c) Prospecting and exploratory activities.

Article 3. District Committees

§ 2740. In carrying out the provisions of this chapter, the board may establish districts and appoint one or more district technical advisory committees to advise the board. In establishing districts for these committees, the board shall take into account physical characteristics, including, but not limited to, climate, topography, geology, type of overburden, and principal mineral commodities. Members of the committees shall be selected and appointed on the basis of their professional qualifications and training in mineral resource conservation, development and utilization, land use planning, mineral economics, or the reclamation of mined lands.

§ 2741. The members of the committee shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be entitled to their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

Article 4. State Policy for the Reclamation of Mined Lands

§ 2755. The board shall adopt regulations that establish state policy for the reclamation of mined lands in accordance with Article 1 (commencing with Section 2710) of this chapter and pursuant to Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

§ 2756. State policy shall apply to the conduct of surface mining operations and shall include, but shall not be limited to, measures to be employed by lead agencies in specifying grading, backfilling, resoiling, revegetation, soil compaction, and other reclamation requirements, and for soil erosion control, water quality and watershed control, waste disposal, and flood control.

§ 2757. The state policy adopted by the board shall be based upon a study of the factors that significantly affect the present and future condition of mined lands, and shall be used as standards by lead agencies in preparing specific and general plans, including the conservation and land use elements of the general plan and zoning ordinances. The state policy shall not include aspects of regulating surface mining operations which are solely of local concern, and not of statewide or regional concern, as determined by the board, such as, but not limited to, hours of operation, noise, dust, fencing, and purely aesthetic considerations.

§ 2758. Such policy shall include objectives and criteria for all of the following:
(a) Determining the lead agency pursuant to the provisions of Section 2771.
(b) The orderly evaluation of reclamation plans.
(c) Determining the circumstances, if any, under which the approval of a proposed surface mining operation by a lead agency need not be conditioned on a guarantee assuring reclamation of the mined lands.

§ 2759. The state policy shall be continuously reviewed and may be revised. During the formulation or revision of the policy, the board shall consult with, and carefully evaluate the recommendations of, the director, any district technical advisory committees, concerned federal, state, and local agencies, educational institutions, civic and public interest organizations, and private organizations and individuals.

§ 2760. The board shall not adopt or revise the state policy, unless a public hearing is first held respecting its adoption or revision. At least 30 days prior to the hearing, the board shall give notice of the hearing by publication pursuant to Section 6061 of the Government Code.

§ 2761. (a) On or before January 1, 1977, and, as a minimum, after the completion of each decennial census, the Office of Planning and Research shall identify portions of the following areas within the state which are urbanized or are subject to urban expansion or other irreversible land uses which would preclude mineral extraction:
(1) Standard metropolitan statistical areas and such other areas for which information is readily available.
(2) Other areas as may be requested by the board.
(b) In accordance with a time schedule, and based upon guidelines adopted by the board, the State Geologist shall classify, on the basis solely of geologic factors, and without regard to existing land use and land ownership, the areas identified by the Office of Planning and Research, any area for which classification has been requested by a petition which has been accepted by the board, or any other areas as may be specified by the board, as one of the following:
(1) An area that contains mineral deposits and is not of regional or statewide significance.
(2) An area that contains mineral deposits and is of regional or statewide significance.
(3) Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which requires further evaluation.
(c) The State Geologist shall require the petitioner to pay the reasonable costs of classifying an area for which classification has been requested by the petitioner.
(d) The State Geologist shall transmit the information to the board for incorporation into the state policy and for transmittal to lead agencies.

§ 2762. (a) Within 12 months of receiving the mineral information described in Section 2761, and also within 12 months of the designation of an area of statewide or regional significance within its jurisdiction, every lead agency shall, in accordance with state policy, establish mineral resource management policies to be incorporated in its general plan which will:
(1) Recognize mineral information classified by the State Geologist and transmitted by the board.
(2) Assist in the management of land use which affect areas of statewide and regional significance.
(3) Emphasize the conservation and development of identified mineral deposits.
(b) Every lead agency shall submit proposed mineral resource management policies to the board for review and comment prior to adoption.
(c) Any subsequent amendment of the mineral resource management policy previously reviewed by the board shall also require review and comment by the board.
(d) If any area is classified by the State Geologist as an area described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 2761, and the lead agency either has designated

that area in its general plan as having important minerals to be protected pursuant to subdivision (a), or otherwise has not yet acted pursuant to subdivision (a), then prior to permitting a use which would threaten the potential to extract minerals in that area, the lead agency shall prepare, in conjunction with preparing any environmental document required by Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000), or in any event if no such document is required, a statement specifying its reasons for permitting the proposed use, and shall forward a copy to the State Geologist and the board for review.

If the proposed use is subject to the requirements of Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000), the lead agency shall comply with the public review requirements of that division. Otherwise, the lead agency shall provide public notice of the availability of its statement by all of the following:

(1) Publishing the notice at least one time in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected by the proposed use.

(2) Directly mailing the notice to owners of property within one-half mile of the parcel or parcels on which the proposed use is located as those owners are shown on the latest equalized assessment role.

The public review period shall not be less than 60 days from the date of the notice and shall include at least one public hearing. The lead agency shall evaluate comments received and shall prepare a written response. The written response shall describe the disposition of the major issues raised. In particular, when the lead agency's position on the proposed use is at variance with recommendations and objections raised in the comments, the written response shall address in detail why specific comments and suggestions were not accepted.

(e) Prior to permitting a use which would threaten the potential to extract minerals in an area classified by the State Geologist as an area described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) of Section 2761, the lead agency may cause to be prepared an evaluation of the area in order to ascertain the significance of the mineral deposit located therein. The results of such evaluation shall be transmitted to the State Geologist and the board.

§ 2763. (a) If an area is designated by the board as an area of regional significance, and the lead agency either has designated that area in its general plan as having important minerals to be protected pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2762, or otherwise has not yet acted pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2762, then prior to permitting a use which would threaten the potential to extract minerals in that area, the lead agency shall prepare a statement specifying its reasons for permitting the proposed use, in accordance with the requirements set forth in subdivision (d) of Section 2762. Lead agency land use decisions involving areas designated as being of regional significance shall be in accordance with the lead agency's mineral resource management policies and shall also, in balancing mineral values against alternative land uses, consider the importance of these minerals to their market region as a whole and not just their importance to the lead agency's area of jurisdiction.

(b) If an area is designated by the board as an area of statewide significance, and the lead agency either has designated that area in its general plan as having important minerals to be protected pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2762, or otherwise has not yet acted pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2762, then prior to permitting a use which would threaten the potential to extract minerals in that area, the lead agency shall prepare a statement specifying its reasons for permitting the proposed use, in accordance with the requirements set forth in subdivision (d) of Section 2762. Lead agency land use decisions involving areas designated as being of statewide significance shall be in accordance with the lead agency's mineral resource management policies and shall also, in balancing mineral values against alternative land uses, consider the importance of the mineral resources to the state and nation as a whole.

§ 2764. (a) Upon the request of an operator or other interested person and payment by the requesting person of the estimated cost of processing the request, the lead agency having jurisdiction shall amend its general plan, or prepare a new specific plan or amend any applicable specific plan, that shall, with respect to the continuation of the existing surface mining operation for which the request is made, plan for future land uses in the vicinity of, and access routes serving, the surface mining operation in light of the importance of the minerals to their market region as a whole, and not just their importance to the lead agency's area of jurisdiction.

(b) In adopting amendments to the general plan, or adopting or amending a specific plan, the lead agency shall make written legislative findings as to whether the future land uses and particular access routes will be compatible or incompatible with the continuation of the surface mining operation, and if they are found to be incompatible, the findings shall include a statement of the reasons why they are to be provided for,

notwithstanding the importance of the minerals to their market region as a whole or their previous designation by the board, as the case may be.

(c) Any evaluation of a mineral deposit prepared by a lead agency for the purpose of carrying out this section shall be transmitted to the State Geologist and the board.

(d) The procedure provided for in this section shall not be undertaken in any area that has been designated pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 2790) if mineral resource management policies have been established and incorporated in the lead agency's general plan in conformance with Article 4 (commencing with Section 2755).

Article 5. Reclamation of Mined Lands and the Conduct of Surface Mining Operations

§ 2770. (a) Except as provided in this section, no person shall conduct surface mining operations unless a permit is obtained from, a reclamation plan has been submitted to and approved by, and financial assurances for reclamation have been approved by, the lead agency for the operation pursuant to this article.

(b) Any person with an existing surface mining operation who has vested rights pursuant to Section 2776 and who does not have an approved reclamation plan shall submit a reclamation plan to the lead agency not later than March 31, 1988. If a reclamation plan application is not on file by March 31, 1988, the continuation of the surface mining operation is prohibited until a reclamation plan is submitted to the lead agency. For purposes of this subdivision, reclamation plans may consist of all or the appropriate sections of any plans or written agreements previously approved by the lead agency or another agency, together with any additional documents needed to substantially meet the requirements of Sections 2772 and 2773 and the lead agency surface mining ordinance adopted pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2774, provided that all documents which together were proposed to serve as the reclamation plan are submitted for approval to the lead agency in accordance with this chapter.

(c) If a person with an existing surface mining operation has received lead agency approval of its financial assurances for reclamation prior to January 1, 1991, the lead agency shall administratively review those existing financial assurances in accordance with subdivision (d) prior to January 1, 1992. The review of existing financial assurances shall not be considered a project for purposes of Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000). Any person with an existing surface mining operation which does not have financial assurances that received lead agency approval prior to January 1, 1991, shall submit financial assurances for reclamation for review in accordance with subdivision (d).

(d) The lead agency's review of reclamation plans submitted pursuant to subdivision (b) or of financial assurances pursuant to subdivision (c) is limited to whether the plan or the financial assurances substantially meet the applicable requirements of Sections 2772, 2773, and 2773.1, and the lead agency surface mining ordinance adopted pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2774, but, in any event, the lead agency shall require that financial assurances for reclamation be sufficient to perform reclamation of lands remaining disturbed. Reclamation plans or financial assurances determined to substantially meet these requirements shall be approved by the lead agency for purposes of this chapter. Reclamation plans or financial assurances determined not to substantially meet these requirements shall be returned to the operator within 60 days. The operator has 60 days to revise the plan or financial assurances to address identified deficiencies, at which time the revised plan or financial assurances shall be returned to the lead agency for review and approval. Except as specified in subdivision (e) or (i), unless the operator has filed on or before July 1, 1990, an appeal pursuant to subdivision (e) with regard to nonapproval of the reclamation plan, or has filed on or before January 1, 1994, an appeal pursuant to subdivision (e) with regard to nonapproval of financial assurances, and that appeal is pending before the board, the continuation of the surface mining operation is prohibited until a reclamation plan and financial assurances for reclamation are approved by the lead agency.

(e) Any person who, based on the evidence of the record, can substantiate that a lead agency has either (1) failed to act according to due process or has relied on considerations not related to the specific applicable requirements of Sections 2772, 2773, and 2773.1, and the lead agency surface mining ordinance adopted pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2774, in reaching a decision to deny approval of a reclamation plan or financial assurances for reclamation, (2) failed to act within a reasonable time of receipt of a completed application, or (3) failed to review and approve reclamation plans or financial assurances as required by subdivisions (c) and (d), may appeal that action or inaction to the board.

(f) The board may decline to hear an appeal if it determines that the appeal raises no substantial issues

related to the lead agency's review pursuant to this section.

(g) Appeals that the board does not decline to hear shall be scheduled and heard at a public hearing within 45 days of the filing of the appeal, or any longer period as may be mutually agreed upon by the board and the person filing the appeal. In hearing an appeal, the board shall only determine whether the reclamation plan or the financial assurances substantially meet the applicable requirements of Sections 2772, 2773, 2773.1, and the lead agency surface mining ordinance adopted pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2774. A reclamation plan or financial assurances determined to meet these requirements shall be approved. A reclamation plan or financial assurances determined not to meet these requirements shall be returned to the person filing the appeal with a notice of deficiencies, who shall be granted, once only, a period of 30 days, or a longer period mutually agreed upon by the operator and the board, to correct the noted deficiencies and submit the revised reclamation plan or the revised financial assurances to the lead agency for review and approval.

(h)(1) Within 90 days of a surface mining operation becoming idle, as defined in Section 2727.1, the operator shall submit to the lead agency for review and approval, an interim management plan. The review and approval of an interim management plan shall not be considered a project for purposes of Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000). The approved interim management plan shall be considered an amendment to the surface mining operation's approved reclamation plan, for purposes of this chapter. The interim management plan shall provide measures the operator will implement to maintain the site in compliance with this chapter, including, but not limited to, all permit conditions.

(2) The interim management plan may remain in effect for a period not to exceed five years, at which time the lead agency shall do one of the following:

(A) Renew the interim management plan for another period not to exceed five years, if the lead agency finds that the surface mining operator has complied fully with the interim management plan.

(B) Require the surface mining operator to commence reclamation in accordance with its approved reclamation plan.

(3) The financial assurances required by Section 2773.1 shall remain in effect during the period that the surface mining operation is idle. If the surface mining operation is still idle after the expiration of its interim management plan, the surface mining operation shall commence reclamation in accordance with its approved reclamation plan.

(4) Within 60 days of the receipt of the interim management plan, or a longer period mutually agreed upon by the lead agency and the operator, the lead agency shall review and approve the plan in accordance with its ordinance adopted pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2774, so long as the plan satisfies the requirements of this subdivision, and so notify the operator in writing. Otherwise, the lead agency shall notify the operator in writing of any deficiencies in the plan. The operator shall have 30 days, or a longer period mutually agreed upon by the operator and the lead agency, to submit a revised plan.

(5) The lead agency shall approve or deny approval of the revised interim management plan within 60 days of receipt. If the lead agency denies approval of the revised interim management plan, the operator may appeal that action to the lead agency's governing body, which shall schedule a public hearing within 45 days of the filing of the appeal, or any longer period mutually agreed upon by the operator and the governing body.

(6) Unless review of an interim management plan is pending before the lead agency, or an appeal is pending before the lead agency's governing body, a surface mining operation which remains idle for over one year after becoming idle as defined in Section 2727.1 without obtaining approval of an interim management plan shall be considered abandoned and the operator shall commence and complete reclamation in accordance with the approved reclamation plan.

(i) Any enforcement action which may be brought against a surface mining operation for operating without an approved reclamation plan, financial assurance, or interim management plan, shall be held in abeyance pending review pursuant to subdivision (b), (c), (d), or (h) or the resolution of an appeal filed with the board pursuant to subdivision (e), or with a lead agency governing body pursuant to subdivision (h).

§ 2770.5. Whenever surface mining operations are proposed in the 100-year flood plain for any stream, as shown in Zone A of Flood Insurance Rate Maps issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and within one mile, upstream or downstream, of any state highway bridge, the lead agency receiving the application for the issuance or renewal of a permit to conduct the surface mining operations shall notify the Department of Transportation that the application has been received. The Department of Transportation shall have a period of not more than 45 days to review and

comment on the proposed surface mining operations with respect to any potential damage to the state highway bridge from the proposed surface mining operations. The lead agency shall not issue or renew the permit until the Department of Transportation has submitted its comments or until 45 days from the date the application for the permit was submitted, whichever occurs first.

§ 2770.6.

(a) Whenever surface mining operations are proposed within the boundaries of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority that may penetrate the groundwater, and whenever proposed reclamation activities may impact groundwater quality, the lead agency reviewing an application to conduct surface mining operations, or reviewing an application for the approval of a reclamation plan, shall notify and provide copies of the subject application to the appropriate California regional water quality control board, and any watermaster for the groundwater recharge basin. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the appropriate California regional water quality control board may impose an administrative fee on the applicant to cover its costs associated with the review of, and preparation of, comments on the subject application, as required pursuant to this section.

(b) Each agency shall have 60 days to review and comment on the proposed surface mining operation described in subdivision (a) and the adoption of any reclamation plan therefor. Each agency shall comment on the existing groundwater quality and the potential impacts to water quality that may result from the mining operations and the proposed reclamation plan, and shall recommend methods and procedures to protect groundwater quality and prevent groundwater degradation. Each agency shall also comment on the proposed mining activities, including the conduct of excavation and backfilling operations in contact with groundwater, and the impact of any proposed alternative land uses on groundwater quality. When the proposed surface mining operations or reclamation plan will impact the groundwater, the lead agency shall not approve the reclamation plan without requiring actions to ensure the reasonable protection of the beneficial uses of groundwater and the prevention of nuisance. Each agency shall have 60 days to review and comment or until 60 days from the date of application, whichever occurs first.

(c) This section applies to activities otherwise subject to this chapter conducted within the boundaries of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority. To the extent of any conflict between this section and any other provision of this chapter, this section shall prevail.

HISTORY

Added Stats 2000 ch 515 § 1 (SB 244).

§ 2771. Whenever a proposed or existing surface mining operation is within the jurisdiction of two or more public agencies, is a permitted use within the agencies, and is not separated by a natural or manmade barrier coinciding with the boundary of the agencies, the evaluation of the proposed or existing operation shall be made by the lead agency in accordance with the procedures adopted by the lead agency pursuant to Section 2774. If a question arises as to which public agency is the lead agency, any affected public agency, or the affected operator, may submit the matter to the board. The board shall notify in writing all affected public agencies and operators that the matter has been submitted, specifying a date for a public hearing. The board shall designate the public agency which shall serve as the lead agency, giving due consideration to the capability of the agency to fulfill adequately the requirements of this chapter and to an examination of which of the public agencies has principal permit responsibility.

§ 2772. (a) The reclamation plan shall be filed with the lead agency, on a form provided by the lead agency, by any person who owns, leases, or otherwise controls or operates on all, or any portion of any, mined lands, and who plans to conduct surface mining operations on the lands.

(b) All documentation for the reclamation plan shall be submitted by the lead agency to the department at one time.

(c) The reclamation plan shall include all of the following information and documents:

(1) The name and address of the surface mining operator and the names and addresses of any persons designated by the operator as an agent for the service of process.

(2) The anticipated quantity and type of minerals for which the surface mining operation is to be conducted.

(3) The proposed dates for the initiation and termination of surface mining operation.

(4) The maximum anticipated depth of the surface mining operation.

(5) The size and legal description of the lands that will be affected by the surface mining operation, a map that includes the boundaries and topographic details of the lands, a description of the general geology of the area, a

detailed description of the geology of the area in which surface mining is to be conducted, the location of all streams, roads, railroads, and utility facilities within, or adjacent to, the lands, the location of all proposed access roads to be constructed in conducting the surface mining operation, and the names and addresses of the owners of all surface interests and mineral interests in the lands.

(6) A description of, and a plan for, the type of surface mining to be employed, and a time schedule that will provide for the completion of surface mining on each segment of the mined lands so that reclamation can be initiated at the earliest possible time on those portions of the mined lands that will not be subject to further disturbance by the surface mining operation.

(7) A description of the proposed use or potential uses of the mined lands after reclamation and evidence that all owners of a possessory interest in the land have been notified of the proposed use or potential uses.

(8) A description of the manner in which reclamation, adequate for the proposed use or potential uses will be accomplished, including both of the following:

(A) A description of the manner in which contaminants will be controlled, and mining waste will be disposed.

(B) A description of the manner in which affected streambed channels and streambanks will be rehabilitated to a condition minimizing erosion and sedimentation will occur.

(9) An assessment of the effect of implementation of the reclamation plan on future mining in the area.

(10) A statement that the person submitting the reclamation plan accepts responsibility for reclaiming the mined lands in accordance with the reclamation plan.

(11) Any other information which the lead agency may require by ordinance.

(d) An item of information or a document required pursuant to subdivision (c) that has already been prepared as part of a permit application for the surface mining operation, or as part of an environmental document prepared for the project pursuant to Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000), may be included in the reclamation plan by reference, if that item of information or that document is attached to the reclamation plan when the lead agency submits the reclamation plan to the director for review. To the extent that the information or document referenced in the reclamation plan is used to meet the requirements of subdivision (c), the information or document shall become part of the reclamation plan and shall be subject to all other requirements of this article.

(e) Nothing in this section is intended to limit or expand the department's authority or responsibility to review a document in accordance with Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000).

§ 2772.5.

(a) A reclamation plan by any person who owns, leases, or otherwise controls or operates on all, or any portion of any, mined lands within the boundaries of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority, and who plans to conduct surface mining operation on those lands, in addition to the information required pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 2772, shall include a description of any programs necessary to monitor the effects of mining and reclamation operations on air, water, and soil quality, on the surrounding area, backfill characteristics, geologic conditions, and slope stability, similar to the California Environmental Quality Act document for the reclamation project.

(b) This section applies to activities otherwise subject to this chapter conducted within the boundaries of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority. To the extent of any conflict between this section and any other provision of this chapter, this section shall prevail.

HISTORY

Added Stats 2000 ch 515 § 2 (SB 244)

§ 2772.6.

(a) In addition to meeting the requirements of Section 2773.1, the amount of financial assurances required of a surface mining operation within the boundaries of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority for any one year shall be in an amount not less than that required to ensure reclamation of the disturbed areas is completed in accordance with the approved reclamation plan.

(b) This section applies to activities otherwise subject to this chapter conducted within the boundaries of the San Gabriel/Basin Water Quality Authority. To the extent of any conflict between this section and any other provision of this chapter, this section shall prevail.

HISTORY

Added Stats 2000 ch 515 § 2 (SB 244)

§ 2772.7. The lead agency, upon approval of a reclamation plan or an amendment to a reclamation plan, shall record a “Notice of Reclamation Plan Approval” with the county recorder. The notice shall read: “Mining operations conducted on the hereinafter described real property are subject to a reclamation plan

approved by the ____ (lead agency), a copy of which is on file with the ____."

(b) In addition to the information required by subdivision (a), the notice shall also include the name of the owner of record of the mine operation, the name of the lead agency, and the acknowledged signature of the lead agency representative.

HISTORY

Added Stats 2006 ch 869 §20 (SB668)

§ 2773. (a) The reclamation plan shall be applicable to a specific piece of property or properties, shall be based upon the character of the surrounding area and such characteristics of the property as type of overburden, soil stability, topography, geology, climate, stream characteristics, and principal mineral commodities, and shall establish site-specific criteria for evaluating compliance with the approved reclamation plan, including topography, revegetation and sediment, and erosion control.

(b) By January 1, 1992, the board shall adopt regulations specifying minimum, verifiable statewide reclamation standards. Subjects for which standards shall be set include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

(1) Wildlife habitat.

(2) Backfilling, regrading, slope stability, and recontouring.

(3) Revegetation.

(4) Drainage, diversion structures, waterways, and erosion control.

(5) Prime and other agricultural land reclamation.

(6) Building, structure, and equipment removal.

(7) Stream protection.

(8) Topsoil salvage, maintenance, and redistribution.

(9) Tailing and mine waste management.

These standards shall apply to each mining operation, but only to the extent that they are consistent with the planned or actual subsequent use or uses of the mining site.

§ 2773.1. (a) Lead agencies shall require financial assurances of each surface mining operation to ensure reclamation is performed in accordance with the surface mining operation's approved reclamation plan, as follows:

(1) Financial assurances may take the form of surety bonds executed by an admitted surety insurer, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 995.120 of the Code of Civil Procedure, irrevocable letters of credit, trust funds, or other forms of financial assurances specified by the board pursuant to subdivision (e), which the lead agency reasonably determines are adequate to perform reclamation in accordance with the surface mining operation's approved reclamation plan.

(2) The financial assurances shall remain in effect for the duration of the surface mining operation and any additional period until reclamation is completed.

(3) The amount of financial assurances required of a surface mining operation for any one year shall be adjusted annually to account for new lands disturbed by surface mining operations, inflation, and reclamation of lands accomplished in accordance with the approved reclamation plan.

(4) The financial assurances shall be made payable to the lead agency and the department. Financial assurances that were approved by the lead agency prior to January 1, 1993, and were made payable to the State Geologist shall be considered payable to the department for purposes of this chapter. However, if a surface mining operation has received approval of its financial assurances from a public agency other than the lead agency, the lead agency shall deem those financial assurances adequate for purposes of this section, or shall credit them toward fulfillment of the financial assurances required by this section, to the public agency, <u>to</u> the lead agency, and the department and otherwise meet the requirements of this section. In any event, if a lead agency and one or more public agencies exercise jurisdiction over a surface mining operation, the total amount of financial assurances required by the lead agency and the public agencies for any one year shall not exceed that amount which is necessary to perform reclamation of lands remaining disturbed. For purposes of this paragraph, a "public agency" may include a federal agency.

(b) If the lead agency or the board, following a public hearing, determines that the operator is financially incapable of performing reclamation in accordance with its approved reclamation plan, or has abandoned its surface mining operation without commencing reclamation, either the lead agency or the director shall do all of the following:

(1) Notify the operator by personal service or certified mail that the lead agency or the director intends to take appropriate action to forfeit the financial assurances and specify the reasons for so doing.

(2) Allow the operator 60 days to commence or cause the commencement of reclamation in accordance with its approved reclamation plan and require that reclamation be completed within the time limits specified in the approved reclamation plan or some other time period

mutually agreed upon by the lead agency or the director and the operator.

(3) Proceed to take appropriate action to require forfeiture of the financial assurances if the operator does not substantially comply with paragraph (2).

(4) Use the proceeds from the forfeited financial assurances to conduct and complete reclamation in accordance with the approved reclamation plan. In no event shall the financial assurances be used for any other purpose. The operator is responsible for the costs of conducting and completing reclamation in accordance with the approved reclamation plan which are in excess of the proceeds from the forfeited financial assurances.

(c) Financial assurances shall no longer be required of a surface mining operation, and shall be released, upon written notification by the lead agency, which shall be forwarded to the operator and the director, that reclamation has been completed in accordance with the approved reclamation plan. If a mining operation is sold or ownership is transferred to another person, the existing financial assurances shall remain in force and shall not be released by the lead agency until new financial assurances are secured from the new owner and have been approved by the lead agency in accordance with Section 2770.

(d) The lead agency shall have primary responsibility to seek forfeiture of financial assurances and to reclaim mine sites under subdivision (b). However, in cases where the board is not the lead agency pursuant to Section 2774.4, the director may act to seek forfeiture of financial assurances and reclaim mine sites pursuant to subdivision (b) only if both of the following occurs:

(1) The financial incapability of the operator or the abandonment of the mining operation has come to the attention of the director.

(2) The lead agency has been notified in writing by the director of the financial incapability of the operator or the abandonment of the mining operation for at least 15 days, and has not taken appropriate measures to seek forfeiture of the financial assurances and reclaim the mine site; and one of the following has occurred:

(A) The lead agency has been notified in writing by the director that failure to take appropriate measures to seek forfeiture of the financial assurances or to reclaim the mine site shall result in actions being taken against the lead agency under Section 2774.4.

(B) The director determines that there is a violation that amounts to an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health, safety, or to the environment.

(C) The lead agency notifies the director in writing that its good faith attempts to seek forfeiture of the financial assurances have not been successful.

The director shall comply with subdivision (b) in seeking forfeiture of financial assurances and reclaiming mine sites.

(e) The board may adopt regulations specifying financial assurance mechanisms other than surety bonds, irrevocable letters of credit, and trust funds, which the board determines are reasonably available and adequate to ensure reclamation pursuant to this chapter, but these mechanisms may not include financial tests, or surety bonds executed by one or more personal sureties. These mechanisms may include reclamation bond pool programs.

(f) On or before March 1, 1993, the board shall adopt guidelines to implement this section. The guidelines are exempt from the requirements of Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, and are not subject to review by the Office of Administrative Law.

§ 2773.15. Notwithstanding Section 2773.1, a surety bond that was executed by any personal surety that was approved by the lead agency prior to February 13, 1998, to ensure that reclamation is performed in accordance with a reclamation plan approved by a lead agency prior to that date, may be utilized to satisfy the requirements of this chapter, if the amount of the financial assurance required to perform the approved reclamation plan, as amended or updated from time to time, does not change from the amount approved prior to February 13,1998.

§ 2773.2. The mineral owner and owner of the surface estate, if legally entitled to do so, shall allow access to the property on which the mining operation is located to any governmental agency or the agent of any company providing financial assurances in connection with the reclamation plan and expending those financial assurances for reclamation, in order that reclamation may be carried out by the governmental agency or company, in accordance with the reclamation plan.

HISTORY

Repealed then added, Stats 2006 ch 869 §20 (SB668)

§ 2773.3. (a) In addition to other reclamation plan requirements of this chapter and regulations adopted by the board pursuant to this chapter, a lead agency may not approve a reclamation plan for a surface mining operation for gold, silver, copper, or other metallic

minerals or financial assurances for the operation, if the operation is located on, or within one mile of, any Native American sacred site and is located in an area of special concern, unless both of the following criteria are met:

(1) The reclamation plan requires that all excavations be backfilled and graded to do both of the following:

(A)Achieve the approximate original contours of the mined lands prior to mining.

(B) Grade all mined materials that are in excess of the materials that can be placed back into excavated area, including, but not limited to, all overburden, spoil piles, and heap leach piles, over the project site to achieve the approximate original contours of the mined lands prior to mining.

(2) The financial assurances are sufficient in amount to provide for the backfilling and grading required by paragraph (1).

(b) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meaning:

(1) “Native American sacred site” means a specific area that is identified by a federally recognized Indian Tribe, Rancheria or Mission Band of Indians, or by the Native American Heritage Commission, as sacred by virtue of its established historical or cultural significance to, or ceremonial use by, a Native American group, including, but not limited to, any area containing a prayer circle, shrine, petroglyph, or spirit break, or a path or area linking the circle, shrine, petroglyph, or spirit break with another circle, shrine, petroglyph, or spirit break.

(2) “Area of special concern” means any area in the California desert that is designated as Class C or Class L lands or as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern under the California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980, as amended, by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, pursuant to Section 1781 of Title 43 of the United States Code.

§ 2773.5. Section 2773.3 does not apply to either of the following:

(a) Any surface mining operation in existence on January 1, 2003, for which the lead agency has issued final approval of a reclamation plan and the financial assurances prior to September 1, 2002.

(b) Any amended reclamation plan or financial assurances that are necessary for the continued operation or expansion of a surface mining operation in existence on January 1, 2003, that otherwise satisfies the requirements of subdivision (a).

§ 2774. (a) Every lead agency shall adopt ordinances in accordance with state policy that establish procedures for the review and approval of reclamation plans and financial assurances and the issuance of a permit to conduct surface mining operations, except that any lead agency without an active surface mining operation in its jurisdiction may defer adopting an implementing ordinance until the filing of a permit application. The ordinances shall establish procedures requiring at least one public hearing and shall be periodically reviewed by the lead agency and revised, as necessary, to ensure that the ordinances continue to be in accordance with state policy.

(b) The lead agency shall conduct an inspection of a surface mining operation within six months of receipt by the lead agency of the surface mining operation's report submitted pursuant to Section 2207, solely to determine whether the surface mining operation is in compliance with this chapter. In no event shall a lead agency inspect a surface mining operation less than once in any calendar year. The lead agency may cause an inspection to be conducted by a state licensed geologist, state licensed civil engineer, state licensed landscape architect, or state licensed forester, who is experienced in land reclamation and who has not been employed by a surface mining operation within the jurisdiction of the lead agency in any capacity during the previous 12 months. All inspections shall be conducted using a form developed by the department and approved by the board that shall include the professional licensing and disciplinary information of the person who conducted the inspection. The operator shall be solely responsible for the reasonable cost of the inspection. The lead agency shall notify the director within 30 days of the date of completion of the inspection that the inspection has been conducted. The notice shall contain a statement regarding the surface mining operation's compliance with this chapter, shall include a copy of the completed inspection form, and shall specify which aspects of the surface mining operations, if any, are inconsistent with this chapter. If the surface mining operation has a review of its reclamation plan, financial assurances, or an interim management plan pending under subdivision (b), (c), (d), or (h) of Section 2770, or an appeal pending before the board or lead agency governing body under subdivision (e) or (h) of Section 2770, the notice shall so indicate. The lead agency shall forward to the operator a copy of the notice, a copy of the completed inspection form, and any supporting documentation, including, but not limited to, any inspection report prepared by the geologist, civil

engineer, landscape architect, or forester, who conducted the inspection.

(c) Prior to approving a surface mining operation's reclamation plan, financial assurances, including existing financial assurances reviewed by the lead agency pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 2770, or any amendments, the lead agency shall submit the plan, assurances, or amendments to the director for review. All documentation for that submission shall be submitted to the director at one time. When the lead agency submits a reclamation plan or plan amendments to the director for review, the lead agency shall also submit to the director, for use in reviewing the reclamation plan or plan amendments, information from any related document prepared, adopted, or certified pursuant to Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000), and shall submit any other pertinent information. The lead agency shall certify to the director that the reclamation plan is in compliance with the applicable requirements of this chapter and Article 9 (commencing with Section 3500) of Chapter 8 of Division 2 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations and the lead agency's mining ordinance in effect at the time that the reclamation plan is submitted to the director for review.

(d) (1) The director shall have 30 days from the date of receipt of a reclamation plan or plan amendments submitted pursuant to subdivision (c), and 45 days from the date of receipt of financial assurances submitted pursuant to subdivision (c), to prepare written comments, if the director so chooses. The lead agency shall evaluate any written comments received from the director relating to the reclamation plan, plan amendments, or financial assurances within a reasonable amount of time.

(2) The lead agency shall prepare a written response to the director's comments describing the disposition of the major issues raised by the director's comments, and submit the lead agency's proposed response to the director at least 30 days prior to approval of the reclamation plan, plan amendment, or financial assurance. The lead agency's response to the director's comments shall describe whether the lead agency proposes to adopt the director's comments to the reclamation plan, plan amendment, or financial assurance. If the lead agency does not propose to adopt the director's comments, the lead agency shall specify, in detail, why the lead agency proposes not to adopt the comments. Copies of any written comments received and responses prepared by the lead agency shall be forwarded to the operator. The lead agency shall also give the director at least 30 days' notice of the time, place, and date of the hearing before the lead agency at which time the reclamation plan, plan amendment, or financial assurance is scheduled to be approved by the lead agency. If no hearing is required by this chapter, or by the local ordinance, of other state law, then the lead agency shall provide 30 days' notice to the director that it intends to approve the reclamation plan, plan amendment, or financial assurance. The lead agency shall send to the director its final response to the director's comments within 30 days following its approval of the reclamation plan, plan amendment, or financial assurance during which period the department retains all powers, duties, and authorities of this chapter.

(3) To the extent that there is a conflict between the comments of a trustee agency or a responsible agency that are based on the agency's statutory or regulatory authority and the comments of other commenting agencies which are received by the lead agency pursuant to Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) regarding a reclamation plan or plan amendments, the lead agency shall consider only the comments of the trustee agency or responsible agency.

(e) Lead agencies shall notify the director of the filing of an application for a permit to conduct surface mining operations within 30 days of an application being filed with the lead agency. By July 1, 1991, each lead agency shall submit to the director for every active or idle mining operation within its jurisdiction, a copy of the mining permit required pursuant to Section 2774, and any conditions or amendments to those permits. By July 1 of each subsequent year, the lead agency shall submit to the director for each active or idle mining operation a copy of any permit or reclamation plan amendments, as applicable, or a statement that there have been no changes during the previous year. Failure to file with the director the information required under this section shall be cause for action under Section 2774.4.

§ 2774.1. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (i) of Section 2770, if the lead agency or the director determines, based upon an annual inspection pursuant to Section 2774, or otherwise confirmed by an inspection of the mining operation, that a surface mining operation is not in compliance with this chapter, the lead agency or the director may notify the operator of that violation by personal service or certified mail. If the violation extends beyond 30 days after the date of the lead agency's or the director's notification, the lead agency or the director may issue an order by personal service or certified mail requiring the operator to comply with this chapter or, if the operator does not have an approved

reclamation plan or financial assurances, cease all further mining activities.

(b) An order issued under subdivision (a) shall not take effect until the operator has been provided a hearing before the lead agency for orders issued by the lead agency, or board for orders issued by the director, concerning the alleged violation. Any order issued under subdivision (a) shall specify which aspects of the surface mine's activities or operations are inconsistent with this chapter, shall specify a time for compliance which the lead agency or director determines is reasonable, taking into account the seriousness of the violation and any good faith efforts to comply with applicable requirements, and shall set a date for the hearing, which shall not be sooner than 30 days after the date of the order.

(c) Any operator who violates or fails to comply with an order issued under subdivision (a) after the order's effective date, as provided in subdivision (b), or who fails to submit a report to the director or lead agency as required by Section 2207, shall be subject to an order by the lead agency or the director imposing an administrative penalty of not more than five thousand dollars ($5,000) per day, assessed from the original date of noncompliance with this chapter or Section 2207. The penalty may be imposed administratively by the lead agency or the director. In determining the amount of the administrative penalty, the lead agency or the director shall take into consideration the nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of the violation or violations, any prior history of violations, the degree of culpability, economic savings, if any, resulting from the violation, and any other matters justice may require. Orders setting administrative penalties shall become effective upon issuance thereof and payment shall be made to the lead agency or the director within 30 days, unless the operator petitions the legislative body of the lead agency, the board, or the superior court for review as provided in Section 2774.2. Any order shall be served by personal service or by certified mail upon the operator. Penalties collected by the director shall be used for no purpose other than to cover the reasonable costs incurred by the director in implementing this chapter or Section 2207.

(d) If the lead agency or the director determines that the surface mine is not in compliance with this chapter, so that the surface mine presents an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health or the environment, the lead agency or the Attorney General, on behalf of the director, may seek an order from a court of competent jurisdiction enjoining that operation.

(e) Upon a complaint by the director, the department, or the board, the Attorney General may bring an action to recover administrative penalties under this section, and penalties under Section 2207, in any court of competent jurisdiction in this state against any person violating any provision of this chapter or Section 2207, or any regulation adopted pursuant to this chapter or Section 2207. The Attorney General may bring such an action on his or her own initiative if, after examining the complaint and the evidence, he or she believes a violation has occurred. The Attorney General may also seek an order from a court of competent jurisdiction compelling the operator to comply with this chapter and Section 2207.

(f) The lead agency has primary responsibility for enforcing this chapter and Section 2207. In cases where the board is not the lead agency pursuant to Section 2774.4, enforcement actions may be initiated by the director pursuant to this section only after the violation has come to the attention of the director and either of the following occurs:

(1) The lead agency has been notified by the director in writing of the violation for at least 15 days, and has not taken appropriate enforcement action.

(2) The director determines that there is a violation which amounts to an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health or safety, or to the environment.

The director shall comply with this section in initiating enforcement actions.

(g) Remedies under this section are in addition to, and do not supersede or limit, any and all other remedies, civil or criminal.

§ 2774.2. (a) Within 30 days of the issuance of an order setting administrative penalties under subdivision (c) of Section 2774.1, the operator may petition that legislative body of the lead agency, if the lead agency has issued the order, or the board for orders issued by the director, for review of the order. If the operator does not petition for review within the time limits set by this subdivision, the order setting administrative penalties shall not be subject to review by any court or agency.

(b) The legislative body of the lead agency or the board shall notify the operator by personal service or certified mail whether it will review the order setting administrative penalties. In reviewing an order pursuant to this section, the record shall consist of the record before the lead agency or the director, and any other relevant evidence which, in the judgment of the legislative body or the board, should be considered to

effectuate and implement the policies of this chapter.

(c) The legislative body or the board may affirm, modify, or set aside, in whole or in part, by its own order, any order of the lead agency or the director setting administrative penalties reviewed by the legislative body or the board pursuant to this section.

(d) Any order of the legislative body or the board issued under subdivision (c) shall become effective upon issuance thereof, unless the operator petitions the superior court for review as provided in subdivision (e). Any order shall be served by personal service or by certified mail upon the operator. Payment of any administrative penalty which is specified in an order issued under subdivision (c), shall be made to the lead agency or the director within 30 days of service of the order; however, the payment shall be held in an interest bearing impound account pending the resolution of a petition for review filed pursuant to subdivision (e).

(e) Any operator aggrieved by an order of the legislative body or the board issued under subdivision (c) may obtain review of the order by filing in the superior court a petition for writ of mandate within 30 days following the issuance of the order. Any operator aggrieved by an order of a lead agency or the director setting administrative penalties under subdivision (c) of Section 2774.1, for which the legislative body or board denies review, may obtain review of the order in the superior court by filing in the court a petition for writ of mandate within 30 days following the denial of review. The provisions of Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure shall govern judicial proceedings pursuant to this subdivision, except that in every case the court shall exercise its independent judgment. If the operator does not petition for a writ of mandate within the time limits set by this subdivision, an order of the board or the legislative body shall not be subject to review by any court or agency.

§ 2774.3. The board shall review lead agency ordinances which establish permit and reclamation procedures to determine whether each ordinance is in accordance with state policy, and shall certify the ordinance as being in accordance with state policy if it adequately meets, or imposes requirements more stringent than, the California surface mining and reclamation policies and procedures established by the board pursuant to this chapter.

§ 2774.4. (a) If the board finds that a lead agency either has (1) approved reclamation plans or financial assurances which are not consistent with this chapter, (2) failed to inspect or cause the inspection of surface mining operations as required by this chapter, (3) failed to seek forfeiture of financial assurances and to carry out reclamation of surface mining operations as required by this chapter, (4) failed to take appropriate enforcement actions as required by this chapter, (5) intentionally misrepresented the results of inspections required under this chapter, or (6) failed to submit information to the department as required by this chapter, the board shall exercise any of the powers of that lead agency under this chapter, except for permitting authority.

(b) If, no sooner than three years after the board has taken action pursuant to subdivision (a), the board finds, after a public hearing, that a lead agency has corrected its deficiencies in implementing and enforcing this chapter, and the rules and regulations adopted pursuant to this chapter, the board shall restore to the lead agency the powers assumed by the board pursuant to subdivision (a).

(c) Before taking any action pursuant to subdivision (a), the board shall first notify the lead agency of the identified deficiencies, and allows the lead agency 45 days to correct the deficiencies to the satisfaction of the board. If the lead agency has not corrected the deficiencies to the satisfaction of the board within the 45-day period, the board shall hold a public hearing within the lead agency's area of jurisdiction, upon a 45-day written notice given to the public in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the city or county, and directly mailed to the lead agency and to all surface mining operators within the lead agency's jurisdiction who have submitted reports as required by Section 2207.

(d) Affected surface mining operators and interested persons have the right, at the public hearing, to present oral and written evidence on the matter being considered. The board may, at the public hearing, place reasonable limits on the right of affected surface mining operators and interested persons to question and solicit testimony.

(e) If, after conducting the public hearing required by subdivision (c), the board decides to take action pursuant to subdivision (a) the board shall, based on the record of the public hearing, adopt written findings which explain all of the following:

(1) The action to be taken by the board.

(2) Why the board decided to take the action.

(3) Why the action is authorized by, and meets the requirements of, subdivision (a).

In addition, the findings shall address the significant issues raised, or written evidence presented, by affected surface mining operators, interested persons, or the lead agency. The transcript of testimony and exhibits, together with all papers and requests filed in the proceedings, shall constitute the exclusive record for decision by the board.

(f) The lead agency, any affected surface mining operator, or any interested person who has presented oral or written evidence at the public hearing before the board pursuant to subdivision (d) may obtain review of the board's action taken pursuant to subdivision (a) by filing in the superior court a petition for writ of mandate within 30 days following the issuance of the board's decision. Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure governs judicial proceedings pursuant to this subdivision, except that in every case the court shall exercise its independent judgment. If a petition for a writ of mandate is not filed within the time limits set by this subdivision, the board's action under subdivision (a) shall not be subject to review by any court or agency.

§ 2774.5. (a) If, upon review of an ordinance, the board finds that it is not in accordance with state policy, the board shall communicate the ordinance's deficiencies in writing to the lead agency. Upon receipt of the written communication, the lead agency shall have 90 days to submit a revised ordinance to the board for certification as being in accordance with state policy. The board shall review the lead agency's revised ordinance for certification within 60 days of its receipt. If the lead agency does not submit a revised ordinance within 90 days, the board shall assume full authority for reviewing and approving reclamation plans submitted to the lead agency until the time the lead agency's ordinances are revised in accordance with state policy.

(b) If, upon review of a lead agency's revised ordinance, the board finds the ordinance is still not in accordance with state policy, the board shall again communicate the ordinance's deficiencies in writing to the lead agency. The lead agency shall have a second 90-day period in which to revise the ordinance and submit it to the board for review. If the board again finds that the revised ordinance is not in accordance with state policy or if no revision is submitted, the board shall assume full authority for reviewing and approving reclamation plans submitted to the lead agency until the time the lead agency's ordinances are revised in accordance with state policy.

(c) In any jurisdiction in which the lead agency does not have a certified ordinance, no person shall initiate a surface mining operation unless a reclamation plan has been submitted to, and approved by, the board. Any reclamation plan, approved by a lead agency under the lead agency's ordinance which was not in accordance with state policy at the time of approval, shall be subject to amendment by the board or under the ordinance certified by the board as being in accordance with state policy.

(d) Reclamation plans approved by the board pursuant to this section shall not be subject to modification by the lead agency at a future date but may be amended by the board. Reclamation plans approved by the board shall be remanded to the lead agency upon certification of the lead agency's ordinance, and the lead agency shall approve the reclamation plan as approved by the board, except that a subsequent amendment as may be agreed upon between the operator and the lead agency may be made according to this chapter. No additional public hearing shall be required prior to the lead agency's approval. Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing the board to issue a permit for the conduct of mining operations.

§ 2775. (a) An applicant whose request for a permit to conduct surface mining operations in an area of statewide or regional significance has been denied by a lead agency, or any person who is aggrieved by the granting of a permit to conduct surface mining operations in an area of statewide or regional significance, may, within 15 days of exhausting his rights to appeal in accordance with the procedures of the lead agency, appeal to the board.

(b) The board may, by regulation, establish procedures for declining to hear appeals that it determines raise no substantial issues.

(c) Appeals that the board does not decline to hear shall be scheduled and heard at a public hearing held within the jurisdiction of the lead agency which processed the original application within 30 days of the filing of the appeal, or such longer period as may be mutually agreed upon by the board and the person filing the appeal. In any such action, the board shall not exercise its independent judgment on the evidence but shall only determine whether the decision of the lead agency is supported by substantial evidence in the light of the whole record. If the board determines the decision of the lead agency is not supported by substantial evidence in the light of the whole record it shall remand the appeal to the lead agency and the lead agency shall

schedule a public hearing to reconsider its action.

§ 2776. No person who has obtained a vested right to conduct surface mining operations prior to January 1, 1976, shall be required to secure a permit pursuant to this chapter as long as the vested right continues and as long as no substantial changes are made in the operation except in accordance with this chapter. A person shall be deemed to have vested rights if, prior to January 1, 1976, he or she has, in good faith and in reliance upon a permit or other authorization, if the permit or other authorization was required, diligently commenced surface mining operations and incurred substantial liabilities for work and materials necessary therefor. Expenses incurred in obtaining the enactment of an ordinance in relation to a particular operation or the issuance of a permit shall not be deemed liabilities for work or materials.

The reclamation plan required to be filed under subdivision (b) of Section 2770, shall apply to operations conducted after January 1, 1976, or to be conducted.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as requiring the filing of a reclamation plan for, or the reclamation of, mined lands on which surface mining operations were conducted prior to January 1, 1976.

§ 2777. Amendments to an approved reclamation plan may be submitted detailing proposed changes from the original plan. Substantial deviations from the original plan shall not be undertaken until such amendment has been filed with, and approved by, the lead agency.

§ 2778. (a) Reclamation plans, reports, applications, and other documents submitted pursuant to this chapter are public records, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the lead agency that the release of that information, or part thereof, would reveal production, reserves, or rate of depletion entitled to protection as proprietary information. The lead agency shall identify such proprietary information as a separate part of the application. Proprietary information shall be made available only to the director and to persons authorized in writing by the operator and by the owner.

(b) A copy of all reclamation plans, reports, applications, and other documents submitted pursuant to this chapter shall be furnished to the director by lead agencies on request.

§ 2779. Whenever one operator succeeds to the interest of another in any incompleted surface mining operation by sale, assignment, transfer, conveyance, exchange, or other means, the successor shall be bound by the provisions of the approved reclamation plan and the provisions of this chapter.

Article 6. Areas of Statewide or Regional Significance

§ 2790. After receipt of mineral information from the State Geologist pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 2761, the board may by regulation adopted after a public hearing designate specific geographic areas of the state as areas of statewide or regional significance and specify the boundaries thereof. Such designation shall be included as a part of the state policy and shall indicate the reason for which the particular area designated is of significance to the state or region, the adverse effects that might result from premature development of incompatible land uses, the advantages that might be achieved from extraction of the minerals of the area, and the specific goals and policies to protect against the premature incompatible development of the area.

§ 2791. The board shall seek the recommendations of concerned federal, state, and local agencies, educational institutions, civic and public interest organizations, and private organizations and individuals in the identification of areas of statewide and regional significance.

§ 2792. Neither the designation of an area of regional or statewide significance nor the adoption of any regulations for such an area shall in any way limit or modify the rights of any person to complete any development that has been authorized pursuant to Part 2 (commencing with Section 11000) of Division 4 of the Business and Professions Code, pursuant to the Subdivision Map Act (Division 2 [commencing with Section 66410] of Title 7 of the Government Code), or by a building permit or other authorization to commence development, upon which such person relies and has changed his position to his substantial detriment, and, which permit or authorization was issued prior to the designation of such area pursuant to Section 2790. If a developer has by his actions taken in reliance upon prior regulations obtained vested or other legal rights that in law would have prevented a local public agency from changing such regulations in a way adverse to his interests, nothing in this chapter authorizes any governmental agency to abridge those rights.

§ 2793. The board may, by regulation adopted after a public hearing, terminate, partially or wholly, the designation of any area of statewide or regional significance on a finding that the direct involvement of the board is no longer required.

Article 7. Fiscal Provisions

§ 2795. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the first two million dollars ($2,000,000) of moneys from mining activities on federal lands disbursed by the United States each fiscal year to this state pursuant to Section 35 of the Mineral Lands Leasing Act, as amended (30 U.S.C. Sec. 191), shall be deposited in the Surface Mining and Reclamation Account in the General Fund, which account is hereby created, and may be expended, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the purposes of this chapter.

(b) Proposed expenditures from the account shall be included in a separate item in the Budget Bill for each fiscal year for consideration by the Legislature. Each appropriation from the account shall be subject to all of the limitations contained in the Budget Act and to all other fiscal procedures prescribed by law with respect to the expenditure of state funds.

§ 2796.5 (a) The director, with the consultation of appropriate state and local agencies, may remediate or complete reclamation of abandoned mined lands that meet all of the following requirements:

(1) No operator having both the responsibility and the financial ability to remediate or reclaim the mined lands can be found within the state.

(2) No reclamation plan is in effect for the mined lands.

(3) No financial assurances exist for the mined lands.

(4) The mined lands are abandoned, as that term is used in paragraph (6) of subdivision (h) of Section 2770.

(b) In deciding whether to act pursuant to subdivision (a), the director shall consider whether the action would accomplish one of the following:

(1) The protection of the public health and safety or the environment from the adverse effects of past surface mining operations.

(2) The protection of property that is in danger as a result of past surface mining operations.

(3) The restoration of land and water resources previously degraded by the adverse effects of surface mining operations.

(c) The director may also consider the potential liability to the state in deciding whether to act under this section. Neither the director, the department, nor the state, or its appointees, employees, or agents in conducting remediation or reclamation under this section, shall be liable under applicable state law~~s~~, and it is the intent of the Legislature that those persons or entities not be liable for those actions under federal law.

(d)(1) The remediation or reclamation work performed under this section includes, but is not limited to, supervision of remediation or reclamation activities that, in the director's judgment, is required by the magnitude of the endeavor or the urgency for prompt action needed to protect the public health and safety or the environment. The action may be taken in default of, or in addition to, remedial work by any other person or governmental agency, and regardless of whether injunctive relief is being sought.

(2) The director may authorize the work to be performed through department staff, with the cooperation of any other governmental agency, or through contracts, and may use rented tools or equipment, either with or without operators furnished.

(3) In cases of emergency where quick action is necessary, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the director may enter into oral contracts for the work, and the contracts, whether written or oral, may include provisions for the rental of tools or equipment and in addition the furnishing of labor and materials necessary to accomplish the work. These emergency contracts are exempt from approval by the Department of General Services pursuant to Section 10295 of the Public Contract Code.

(4) The director shall be permitted reasonable access to the abandoned mined lands as necessary to perform any remediation or reclamation work. The access shall be obtained with the consent of the owner or possessor of the property or, if the consent is withheld or otherwise unobtainable, with a warrant duly issued pursuant to the procedure described in Title 13 (commencing with Section 1822.50) of Part 3 of the Code of Civil Procedure. However, in the event of an emergency affecting the public health or safety, the director may enter the property without consent or the issuance of a warrant.

(e) For any remediation or reclamation work accomplished, or other necessary remedial action taken by any governmental agency, the operator, landowner, and the person or persons who allowed or caused any pollution or nuisance are liable to that governmental agency to the extent of the reasonable costs actually incurred in remediating, reclaiming, or taking other

remedial action. The amount of the costs is recoverable in a civil action by, and paid to, the governmental agency and the director to the extent of the director's contribution to the costs of the remediation, reclamation, cleanup, and abatement or other corrective action.

(f) (1) The amount of the costs constitutes a lien on the affected property upon service of a copy of the notice of lien on the owner and upon the recordation of a notice of lien, which identifies the property on which the remediation or reclamation was accomplished, the amount of the lien, and the owner of record of the property, in the office of the county recorder of the county in which the property is located. Upon recordation, the lien has the same force, effect, and priority as a judgment lien, except that it attaches only to the property posted and described in the lien. The lien shall continue for 10 years from the time of the recording of the notice of the lien unless sooner released or otherwise discharged, and may be renewed.

(2) Not later than 45 days after receiving a notice of lien, the owner may petition the court for an order releasing the property from the lien or reducing the amount of the lien. In this court action, the governmental agency that incurred the costs shall establish that the costs were reasonable and necessary. The lien may be foreclosed by an action brought by the director, for a money judgment. Money recovered by a judgment in favor of the director shall be used for the purposes of this chapter.

(g) If the operation has been idle for more than one year without obtaining an approved interim management plan, an application for the review of an interim management plan filed for the purpose of preventing the director from undertaking remediation or reclamation of abandoned mined lands under this section shall be voidable by the lead agency or the board upon notice and hearing by the lead agency or the board. In the event of conflicting determinations, the decision of the board shall prevail.

(h) "Remediate," for the purposes of this section, means to improve conditions so that threat to or damage to public health and safety or the environment are lessened or ameliorated, including the cleanup and abatement of pollution or nuisance or threatened pollution or nuisance.

(i) "Threaten," for the purposes of this section, means a condition creating a probability of harm, when the probability and potential extent of harm make it reasonably necessary to take action to prevent, reduce, or mitigate damages to persons, property, or the environment.

(j) This section shall apply to abandoned mined lands on which the mining operations were conducted after January 1, 1976.

(k) The director may act under this section only upon the appropriation of funds by the Legislature for the purposes of carrying out this section.

(l) Nothing in this section limits the authority of any state agency under any other law or regulation to enforce or administer any cleanup or abatement activity.

HISTORY

Added Stats 2000 ch 713 § 2 (SB 666), operative until January 1, 2003.

Sunset provision repealed Stats 2006 ch 869 §24 (SB668).

ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND REPORTING FEE

Public Resources Code Section 2207
(Repealed and added by AB 3551 [Sher, Chapter 1097, Statutes of 1990]),
(Amended by AB 3903 [Sher, Chapter 1101, Statutes of 1990], AB 1506 [Sher, Chapter 845, Statutes of 1991], AB 3098 [Sher, Chapter 1077, Statutes of 1992], SB 741 [Rogers, Chapter 1287, Statutes of 1993], AB 297 [Thomson, Chapter 869, Statutes of 1999], SB 649 [Kuehl, Chapter 794, Statutes of 2003], SB1110 [Chapter 383, Statutes of 2005], and SB668 [Kuehl, Chapter 869, Statutes of 2006])

§ 2207. (a) The owner or the operator of a mining operation within the state shall forward to the director annually, not later than a date established by the director, upon forms approved by the board from time to time, a report that identifies all of the following:

(1) The name, address, and telephone number of the

person, company, or other owner of the mining operation.

(2) The name, address, and telephone number of a designated agent who resides in this state, and who will receive and accept service of all orders, notices, and processes of the lead agency, board, director, or court.

(3) The location of the mining operation, its name, its mine number as issued by the Bureau of Mines or the director, its section, township, range, latitude, longitude, and approximate boundaries of the mining operation marked on a United States Geological Survey 71/2-minute or 15-minute quadrangle map.

(4) The lead agency.

(5) The approval date of the mining operation's reclamation plan.

(6) The mining operation's status as active, idle, reclaimed, or in the process of being reclaimed.

(7) The commodities produced by the mine and the type of mining operation.

(8) Proof of annual inspection by the lead agency.

(9) Proof of financial assurances.

(10) Ownership of the property, including government agencies, if applicable, by the assessor's parcel number, and total assessed value of the mining operation.

(11) The approximate permitted size of the mining operation subject to Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 2710), in acres.

(12) The approximate total acreage of land newly disturbed by the mining operation during the previous calendar year.

(13) The approximate total of disturbed acreage reclaimed during the previous calendar year.

(14) The approximate total unreclaimed disturbed acreage remaining as of the end of the calendar year.

(15) The total production for each mineral commodity produced during the previous year.

(16) A copy of any approved reclamation plan and any amendments or conditions of approval to any existing reclamation plan approved by the lead agency.

(b) (1) Every year, not later than the date established by the director, the person submitting the report pursuant to subdivision (a) shall forward to the lead agency, upon forms furnished by the board, a report that provides all of the information specified in paragraphs (1) to (16), inclusive, of subdivision (a).

(2) The owner or operator of a mining operation shall allow access to the property to any governmental agency or the agent of any company providing financial assurances in connection with the reclamation plan, in order that the reclamation can be carried out by the entity or company, in accordance with the provisions of the reclamation plan.

(c) Subsequent reports shall include only changes in the information submitted for the items described in subdivision (a), except that, instead of the approved reclamation plan, the reports shall include any reclamation plan amendments approved during the previous year. The reports shall state whether review of a reclamation plan, financial assurances, or an interim management plan is pending under subdivision (b), (c), (d), or (h) of Section 2770, or whether an appeal before the board or lead agency governing body is pending under subdivision (e) or (h) of Section 2770. The director shall notify the person submitting the report and the owner's designated agent in writing that the report and the fee required pursuant to subdivision (d) have been received, specify the mining operation's mine number if one has not been issued by the Bureau of Mines, and notify the person and agent of any deficiencies in the report within 90 days of receipt. That person or agent shall have 30 days from receipt of the notification to correct the noted deficiencies and forward the revised reports to the director and the lead agency. Any person who fails to comply with this section, or knowingly provides incorrect or false information in reports required by this section, may be subject to an administrative penalty as provided in subdivision (c) of Section 2774.1.

(d) (1) The board shall impose, by regulation, pursuant to paragraph (2), an annual reporting fee on, and method for collecting annual fees from, each active or idle mining operation. The maximum fee for any single mining operation may not exceed four thousand dollars ($4,000) annually and may not be less than one hundred dollars ($100) annually, as adjusted for the cost of living as measured by the California Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers, calendar year averages, using the percentage change in the previous year, beginning with the 2005-06 fiscal year and annually thereafter.

(2) (A) The board shall adopt, by regulation, a schedule of fees authorized under paragraph (1) to cover the department's cost in carrying out this section and Chapter (commencing with Section 2710), as reflected in the Governor's Budget, and may adopt those regulations as emergency regulations. In establishing the schedule of fees to be paid by each active and idle mining operation, the fees shall be calculated on an equitable basis reflecting the size and type of operation. The board shall

also consider the total assessed value of the mining operation, the acreage disturbed by mining activities, and the acreage subject to the reclamation plan.

(B) Regulations adopted pursuant to this subdivision shall be adopted by the board in accordance with Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code. The adoption of any emergency regulations pursuant to this subdivision shall be considered necessary to address an emergency and shall be considered by the Office of Administrative Law to be necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, and general welfare.

(3) The total revenue generated by the reporting fees may not exceed, and may be less than, the amount of three million five hundred thousand dollars ($3,500,000), as adjusted for the cost of living as measured by the California Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers, calendar year averages, using the percentage change in the previous year, beginning with the 2005-06 fiscal year and annually thereafter. If the director determines that the revenue collected during the preceding fiscal year was greater or less than the cost to operate the program, the board shall adjust the fees to compensate for the overcollection or undercollection of revenues.

(4) (A) The reporting fees established pursuant to this subdivision shall be deposited in the Mine Reclamation Account, which is hereby created. Any fees, penalties, interest, fines, or charges collected by the director or board pursuant to this chapter or Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 2710) shall be deposited in the Mine Reclamation Account. The money in the account shall be available to the department and board, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the purpose of carrying out this section and complying with Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 2710), which includes, but is not limited to, classification and designation of areas with mineral resources of statewide or regional significance, reclamation plan and financial assurance review, mine inspection, and enforcement.

(B) (i) In addition to reporting fees, the board shall collect five dollars ($5) per ounce of gold and ten cents ($0.10) per ounce of silver mined within the state and shall deposit the fees collected in the Abandoned Mine Reclamation and Minerals Fund Subaccount, which is hereby created in the Mine Reclamation Account. The department may expend the moneys in the subaccount, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for only the purposes of Section 2796.5 and as authorized herein for the remediation of abandoned mines.

(ii) Notwithstanding subdivision (j) of Section 2796.5, fees collected pursuant to clause (i) may also be used to remediate features of historic abandoned mines and lands that they impact. For the purposes of this section, historic abandoned mines are mines for which operations have been conducted before January 1, 1976, and include, but are not limited to, historic gold and silver mines.

(5) In case of late payment of the reporting fee, a penalty of not less than one hundred dollars ($100) or 10 percent of the amount due, whichever is greater, plus interest at the rate of 11/2 percent per month, computed from the delinquent date of the assessment until and including the date of payment, shall be assessed. New mining operations that have not submitted a report shall submit a report prior to commencement of operations. The new operation shall submit its fee according to the reasonable fee schedule adopted by the board, and the month that the report is received shall become that operation's anniversary month.

(e) The lead agency, or the board when acting as the lead agency, may impose a fee upon each mining operation to cover the reasonable costs incurred in implementing this chapter and Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 2710).

(f) For purposes of this section, "mining operation" means a mining operation of any kind or character whatever in this state, including, but not limited to, a mining operation that is classified as a "surface mining operation" as defined in Section 2735, unless excepted by Section 2714. For the purposes of fee collections only, "mining operation" may include one or more mines operated by a single operator or mining company on one or more sites, if the total annual combined mineral production for all sites is less than 100 troy ounces for precious metals, if precious metals are the primary mineral commodity produced, or less than 100,000 short tons if the primary mineral commodity produced is not precious metals.

(g) Any information in reports submitted pursuant to subdivision (a) that includes or otherwise indicates the total mineral production, reserves, or rate of depletion of any mining operation may not be disclosed to any member of the public, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 6252 of the Government Code. Other portions of the reports are public records unless excepted by statute. Statistical bulletins based on these reports and published under Section 2205 shall be compiled to show, for the state as a whole and separately for each lead agency, the

total of each mineral produced therein. In order not to disclose the production, reserves, or rate of depletion from any identifiable mining operation, no production figure shall be published or otherwise disclosed unless that figure is the aggregated production of not less than three mining operations. If the production figure for any lead agency would disclose the production, reserves, or rate of depletion of less than three mining operations or otherwise permit the reasonable inference of the production, reserves, or rate of depletion of any identifiable mining operation, that figure shall be combined with the same figure of not less than two other lead agencies without regard to the location of the lead agencies. The bulletin shall be published annually by June 30 or as soon thereafter as practicable.

(h) The approval of a form by the board pursuant to this section is not the adoption of a regulation for purposes of Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code and is not subject to that chapter.

SITE INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Public Resources Code Section 2208
(Amended by AB 2943 [Allen, Chapter 999, Statutes of 1992])

§ 2208. The director or a qualified assistant may at any time enter or examine any and all mines, quarries, wells, mills, reduction works, refining works, and other mineral properties or working plants in this state in order to gather data to comply with the provisions of this chapter.

PURCHASE AND USE OF MINED MATERIALS BY STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

Public Contract Code Sections 10295.5 and 20676
(Amended by AB 3098 [Sher, Chapter 1077, Statutes of 1992], AB 723 [Sher, Chapter 278, Statutes of 1993], SB 649 [Kuehl, Chapter 794, Statutes of 2003], SB1110 [Chapter 383, Statutes of 2005], and SB668 [Kuehl, Chapter 869, Statutes of 2006])

10295.5. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no state agency shall acquire or utilize sand, gravel, aggregates, or other minerals produced from a surface mining operation subject to the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 2710) of Division 2 of the Public Resources Code), unless the operation is identified in the list published pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 2717 of the Public Resources Code as having either of the following:

(1) An approved reclamation plan and financial assurances covering the affected surface mining operation.

(2) An appeal pending before the State Mining and Geology Board pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 2770 of the Public Resources Code with respect to the reclamation plan or financial assurances.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no state agency shall contract with a person who is not a surface mining operator, but who is supplying or utilizing sand, gravel, aggregates, or other minerals, to perform work for, or supply materials to, a state agency, unless the operation is identified in the list published pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 2717 of the Public Resources Code as having either of the following:

(1) An approved reclamation plan and financial assurances covering the affected surface mining operation.

(2) An appeal pending before the State Mining and Geology Board pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 2770 of the Public Resources Code with respect to the reclamation plan or financial assurances.

(c) For purposes of this section, "minerals" means any naturally occurring chemical element or compound, or groups of elements and compounds, formed from inorganic processes and organic substances, including, but not limited to, coal, peat, and bituminous rock, but excluding geothermal resources, natural gas, and petroleum.

(d) The requirements of this section shall apply to mining operations on federal lands or Indian lands that are subject to the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 2710) of Division 2 of the Public Resources Code) pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Conservation and the federal agency having jurisdiction over the lands.

20676. A contractor or a mining operator shall not sell any sand, gravel, or other minerals, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 10295.5, to a local agency, unless the operation is not subject to the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 2710) of Division 2 of the Public Resources Code), or unless the contractor or mining operator certifies, under penalty of perjury, that the minerals are from a mining operation identified in the list published pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 2717 of the Public Resources Code.

LIABILITY LIMITATIONS FOR REMEDIATION/RECLAMATION OF ABANDONED MINES

See Water Code Section 13397 et seq.
(Added by SB 1108 [Leslie, Chapter 878, Statutes of 1995])

NOTE

While this section amends the California Water Code, liabilities under the federal Clean Water Act may remain until similar federal amendments are adopted.

2772.7. (a) A lead agency, upon approval of a reclamation plan or an amendment to a reclamation plan, shall record a “Notice of Reclamation Plan Approval” with the county recorder. The notice shall read: “Mining operations conducted on the hereinafter described real property are subject to a reclamation plan approved by the ____ (lead agency), a copy of which is on file with the ____.”

(b) In addition to the information required by subdivision (a), the notice shall also include the name of the owner of record of the mine operation, the name of the lead agency, and the acknowledged signature of the lead agency representative.