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## ***LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP***

### ***STATE***

- **SB111**

Amends the Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act adding language requiring the following to be transferred by the Department of Environmental Protection into the Reclamation Fee O&M Trust Account: civil penalties collected for a violation of The Clean Streams Law which is any manner connected with or related to coal mining activities; and moneys collected as a result of a violation of any rule, regulation or order of the department or condition of any permit issued under The Clean Streams Law which is in any manner connected with or related to a coal mining activity. Further provides all of these civil penalties and moneys shall be used to pay for construction costs and operation and maintenance costs associated with treating post-mining pollution discharges at ABS Legacy Sites.

SB111 was introduced on Jan 18, 2023 and referred to Environmental Resources and Energy in the Senate the same day. Still no movement on this bill. Unlikely it will move.

- **HR185**

PA House Rep Webster (D) introduced a resolution to direct the Joint State Government Commission to study the usage of geothermal energy in abandoned mining locations. By way of background, geothermal energy uses the consistent heat output of the subsurface earth to create energy or regulate temperatures in residential, commercial, and industrial capacities. HR185 passed a Committee Roll Call Vote on October 16, 2023 and was adopted November 14, 2024 in the House This resolution was previously introduced in 2022.

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/Legis/CSM/showMemoPublic.cfm?chamber=H&SPick=20230&cosponId=41187>

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?year=2023&sind=0&body=H&type=R&bn=185>

# ***FEDERAL***

## **House Bills**

- **Community Reclamation Partnerships Act (CRPA) H.R.6243 (*Previous number: HR 1146*)**

This is the third iteration of this bill. It was debated on April 9<sup>th</sup> and passed the House. It was received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

WPCAMR had supported CRPA but recognizes it needs more work to be relevant to our community. The IMCC and states, which had previously supported this bill, recognize that a better bill could be fashioned modeled after the current Hard Rock Good Sam bill in Congress and are not that supportive of CRPA. Given the past history of this bill, it is unlikely it will move forward.

Somewhat related to this topic is the Hard Rock Good Sam bill (S 2781) introduced by Sens Risch (R-ID) and Heinrich (D-NM) that made it out of the Senate Committee and now needs to go through the House. It has had broad bi-partisan support from the Senate. This bill, in order to go through the House, needs to go through several committees of jurisdiction. We understand that one of the chairs of these House committees doesn't like Good Sam bills like this and isn't likely to help it along. TU has been the main push for this Hard Rock Good Sam bill. The proposed program is a "pilot" program which would provide no more than 15 remediation permits. If this goes through and is successful, it may be a model for a coal Good Sam bill as stated in the previous paragraph.

### **Additional House Bills Introduced**

Three bills aimed at ensuring coal mine operators clean up and restore the land after mining is complete have been introduced this month. The legislation comes as several Democratic lawmakers and environmental groups raised concerns in recent months about potential environmental damages caused by idled coal mines. Below are the newly introduced measures:

HR 2505 Coal Cleanup Taxpayer Protection Act

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2505/text>

Eliminates self bonding practices and requires operators to put down the full cost required for cleanup of their mine.

HR 7941 Bond Improvement and Reclamation Assurance Act  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/7941>

Requires regulators to consider important financial and environmental factors when calculating and recalculating bond amounts.

(No number yet) Stream Protection and Vegetation Restoration Act  
[https://beyer.house.gov/uploadedfiles/beyer\\_104\\_xml.pdf](https://beyer.house.gov/uploadedfiles/beyer_104_xml.pdf)

Imposes strict deadlines for coal mine reclamation and increases monitoring of surface and groundwaters during mining and cleanup.

All three bills were referred to the House Natural Resources Committee

### **OSMRE News**

Sharon Buccino from Wyoming has been appointed Principal Deputy Director for OSMRE. She will fulfill the duties of the director since there is no OSMRE director and the existing Deputy Director cannot fulfill those duties.

### **Reauthorization Work**

With reauthorization having passed and the Infrastructure funding secured along with the STREAM Act passed, the AML Campaign continues to meet weekly with regard to understanding and potentially mitigating issues surrounding implementation of the Infrastructure funding and the STREAM Act.

## ***OTHER ITEMS***

### **Quick Response**

We have finished expending funds from QR9 and submitted the final report along with several reimbursements that are being held back pending acceptance of the final report. We are taking applications for funding to conduct urgent repairs to water quality BMPs, not just for AMD-related projects but other water quality BMPs as well under our QR10 grant .

We also have a Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program grant from OSMRE, to provide funding for materials for Quick Response-type projects that deal only with AMR. This grant is only for AMD projects. .

Related to OMR, as I reported at our November meeting, OSMRE has funding to begin a passive

treatment OM&R grant program different from WCAP. We understand there is some confusion as to whether the funding they have is to put the program together internally (as IMCC has understood) or to actually grant out to nonprofits to do work. We will continue to watch what happens with this.

## **2024 Statewide AMR Conference**

The conference will be held October 22 – 24<sup>th</sup> at Ramada State college. However, given some problems with securing a contract with that venue, the planning committee may have to switch to another venue, perhaps the Penn Stater. Anne will have more information about our conference and the planning.

## **Administrative**

I continued to perform the usual administrative duties and work with our Treasurer Kelly Williams on account reconciliations, check signing, etc.

We have finished the 2024 ARIPPA award application period with three applications. Two are being presented to the Board for approval to send off to ARIPPA.

We also continue to participate in a grant-funded project (along with SRI and EPCAMR) to determine the watershed community's needs with regard to administering IIA and/or AMLER projects.

## ***Other Meetings***

- PA annual AMR conference planning committee
- Weekly AML Campaign phone calls ongoing.
- Various phone calls from watershed groups and/or others.
- Phone interview in April with Public Radio's Allegheny Front.
- Attended a two-day forum in State College in March to revise the PA Wildlife Action Plan by PGC and PFBC.