



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Washington, D.C. 20240



DEC 8 1999

To All Interested Parties:

The Charleston Field Office (CHFO) recently forwarded to me the enclosed oversight report on land use (postmining land use) and land form (approximate original contour) relating to mining operations often referred to by the public as "mountaintop removal mines" in West Virginia. This report, which contains a wealth of factual material and some findings and proposed recommendations, was developed by the CHFO and reflects discussions at the OSM Headquarters level and includes the Department of the Interior Solicitor's comments.

The resolution of some of the issues raised in this report may have implications beyond the boundaries of West Virginia. Therefore, I have decided to circulate the draft oversight report to interested parties both within and outside West Virginia. Comments are due to the Office of Surface Mining by January 15, 1999. These comments will be considered as I, in conjunction with OSM's Management Council and the Solicitor's Office, reach final decisions on this matter and issue a final report.

The West Virginia surface mining program is administered by the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection (WVDEP). WVDEP assisted OSM in data gathering but has not formally commented on this draft oversight report as an analysis by OSM.

Any comments may be electronically transmitted to OSM Headquarters by January 15, 1999, via the Internet, mailed, or hand delivered to the office. The E-mail address for the office is: (PHAIRSTO@OSMRE.GOV). The Postal Service mailing address is:

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If you would like to discuss your comments or questions on the draft oversight report, please contact Al Klein, Regional Director, Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center, on 412-937-2828. When complete, the final report will be distributed to all who commented on the draft oversight report and others who request a copy.

Thank you for your interest. Through cooperative efforts like this, we can improve the administration of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act.

Respectfully yours,

Kathy Karpan
Director

Enclosure