

# Alaska

## The largest amount of undeveloped coal resources

Alaska coal has been mined since 1855 when the Russian-American Company started the first mine on the Kenai Peninsula; the coal was used to fuel whaling ships and cargo freighters. Although Alaska's known coal reserves are enormous, estimated at approximately 170 billion tons (40% of the U.S. total), coal mining does not play a significant role in the State's economy.

Despite the vast reserves of coal, conditions that impact mining and reclamation hamper its development. For example, permafrost occurs in about 75% of the State; tundra vegetation occupies vast treeless regions; much of the coal bearing region is characterized by extremely cold, harsh winter weather, a very short summer growing season, and transportation problems. Additionally, some coal fields are located in areas that are subject to potentially high seismic risk. These factors tend to make Alaska coal mining and reclamation activities more difficult than mining in the lower 48 states.

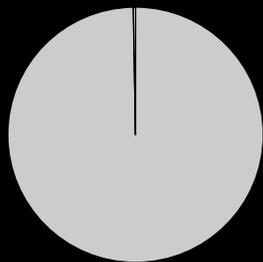
Alaska's program to regulate surface coal mining was approved May 2, 1983. The Alaska Abandoned Mine Lands program was approved on December 23, 1983, with the State assuming responsibility for the emergency program in November 1992. To date, there have been no identified abandoned mine emergencies since the Surface Mining Law was passed in 1977.

A total of about \$1.1 million has been spent by Alaska and the Office of Surface Mining abating high-priority Abandoned Mine Land problems. The majority of these problems have been high priority backfilling of dangerous highwalls. Alaska has also completed reclamation of non-coal Abandoned Mine Land problems costing about \$700 thousand.

Abandoned Mine Land problems remaining to be reclaimed in Alaska total over \$47 million. Of these, over 95 percent are Priority 2 dangerous highwalls. There are also small amounts in non-coal Priority 1 & Priority 2 projects identified (about \$200 thousand). However, as a state receiving the minimum program grant, Alaska receives \$1.5 million annually to reclaim its high priority Abandoned Mine Land problems.

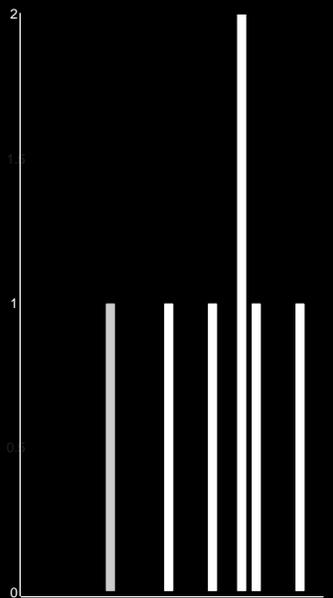
## coal production<sup>10</sup>

	1978		1997		1978-1997 Rank
	Amount	Percent U.S. Total	Amount	Percent U.S. Total	
<b>Tons Produced</b>					
Surface	561,271	0.2%	1,396,336	0.2%	21
Underground	0	0%	0	0%	0
Lignite	0	0%	0	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>561,271</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>1,396,336</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Number of Producing Mines</b>					
Surface (bituminous coal)	1	0.03%	2	0.08%	21
Underground	0	0%	0	0%	0
Lignite (surface)	0	0%	0	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.01%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.04%</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Mine Production</b>					
Average	561,271	789%	698,168	265%	
>1,000,000 tons	0	0%	0	0%	
300,000-1,000,000 tons	1	0.4%	2	0.5%	
<300,000 tons	0	0%	0	0%	



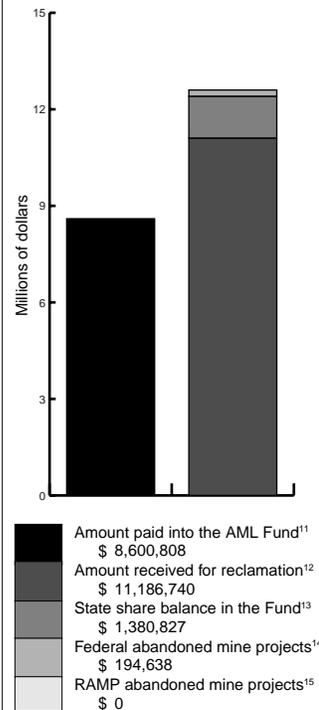
Production tonnage 1978-1997

■ U.S. Total  
■ Alaska coal production



Number of new permits 1978-1997

■ Interim Program  
■ Permanent Program



# Active mining and reclamation<sup>16</sup>

	1978	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	Total
<b>Number of New Permits</b>																					
Surface Mining	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	6
Underground Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Acreage Permitted</b>																					
Surface Mining	0	0	0	0	0	2,337	0	0	0	2,337	0	0	359	0	1,285	131	0	0	54	0	6,503
Underground Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	66	0	0	0	0	0	66
<b>Acreage of Bond Release</b>																					
Interim Prog. (final)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	925	0	0	0	925
<b>Inspections</b>																					
Complete	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5	4	9	4	3	9	8	6	6	17	19	24	21	24	159
Partial	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	10	8	2	8	7	16	16	18	18	32	34	35	33	61	298
Oversight	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	7	NA	2	6	1	2	4	3	8	6	6	2	0	55
<b>Citations Issued</b>																					
NOV's	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4	1	1	4	2	2	1	3	4	5	2	4	2	1	36
CO's	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

# Abandoned coal mine reclamation 1977-1997<sup>17</sup>

	Reclaimed Problems			Remaining Problems	
	OSM Emergency	State Emergency	Non-Emergency	Number	Estimated Cost
<b>Priority 1 &amp; 2 (Protection of Public Health, Safety, and General Welfare) and Emergency Projects</b>					
Clogged Streams (miles)	0	0	0.0	0	\$ 0
Clogged Stream Lands (acres)	0	0	0.0	0	0
Highwalls (feet)	0	0	6,491.0	18,590.0	46,819,860
Impoundments (count)	0	0	3.0	0	0
Piles & Embankments (acres)	0	0	7.5	0	0
Slides (acres)	0	0	0.0	0	0
Gases (count)	0	0	0.0	0	0
Equipment & Facilities (count)	0	0	63.0	8.0	215,000
Water Bodies (count)	0	0	2,000.0	0	0
Industrial Waste (acres)	0	0	4.0	0	0
Portals (count)	0	0	11.0	1.0	17,000
Polluted Water: Agriculture & Industrial (count)	0	0	0.0	0	0
Polluted Water: Human Consumption (count)	0	0	0.0	0	0
Subsidence (acres)	0	0	0.0	0	0
Surface Burning (acres)	0	0	0.0	0	0
Underground Mine Fires (acres)	0	0	0.0	0	0
Vertical Openings (count)	0	0	18.0	11.0	76,100
<b>Total</b>					<b>\$ 47,127,960</b>
<b>Priority 3 (Environmental Restoration)</b>					
Bench (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Industrial Waste (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment & Facilities (count)	0	0	0	6.0	2,500
Gob (acres)	0	0	6.5	0	0
Highwall (feet)	0	0	0	0	0
Haul Road (acres)	0	0	0	5.0	17,500
Mine Opening (count)	0	0	0	0	0
Pit (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Spoil Area (acres)	0	0	47.0	4.0	2,620
Slurry (acres)	0	0	9.0	0	0
Slump (acres)	0	0	25.0	0	0
Water (gallons/minute)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>					<b>\$ 22,620</b>