



Alabama Department of Labor Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program 2017 REPORT

The State of Alabama Department of Labor's, Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation (AML) Program administers the federal AML program to address the highest priority problems resulting from coal mining that occurred prior to the passage of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). ADOL's AML receives annual grants from the US Department of Interior Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement which is funded by a federal severance tax on coal mined nationwide.

Abandoned Mine Lands are plagued by safety and health hazards as well as diminished economic opportunities. The AML Programs reclaim such hazards as subsidence, mine fires, hazardous mine openings, dangerous highwalls, and acid mine drainage with no liability to the current landowners.

KEY ISSUES

- ✓ The current AML fee is set to expire in 2021 leaving billions of dollars in unreclaimed abandoned mine hazards across the nation with no resources. The State of Alabama, AML program strongly supports the reauthorization of the AML fee collection to extend to 2036.
- ✓ **Alabama** is projected to receive \$49.4 million from the AML fund between 2018 and 2027 to complete critical reclamation work on the remaining 42,000 acres of abandoned mine land sites impacted by pre-SCMRA coal mining. If the AML fee collection is extended to 2036, Alabama will be eligible for approximately \$91 million in additional funding.
- ✓ **Alabama** currently has an estimated \$452 million worth of unfunded Priority 1,2, & 3 abandoned mine features in need of reclamation.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

With the \$85 million in AML grant funding received so far, Alabama's AML Program has completed 661 Abandoned Mine Land projects on sites left by abandoned coal mines, resulting in increased safety for the thousands of Alabama citizens still residing in and around these communities:

- **14,000 acres** of high priority abandoned coal mine sites have been reclaimed.
- Hazards associated with more than **1613** open mine shafts and portals have been eliminated.
- Over **81.6 miles** of High Priority dangerous highwalls have been reclaimed and are no longer a threat to people.
- Over **2279 acres** of dangerous piles and embankments have been eliminated and the land reclaimed.
- Over **506 acres** of gob fires and surface burning has been reclaimed and the associated hazards eliminated.
- It has been recognized that AML Programs create numerous job opportunities each year. In addition, for every federal dollar spent for construction, \$1.59 in the form of labor income, state and local tax revenue, and construction value improvements were returned to the economy.
- Thousands of citizens in Alabama have been protected from abandoned mine hazards.

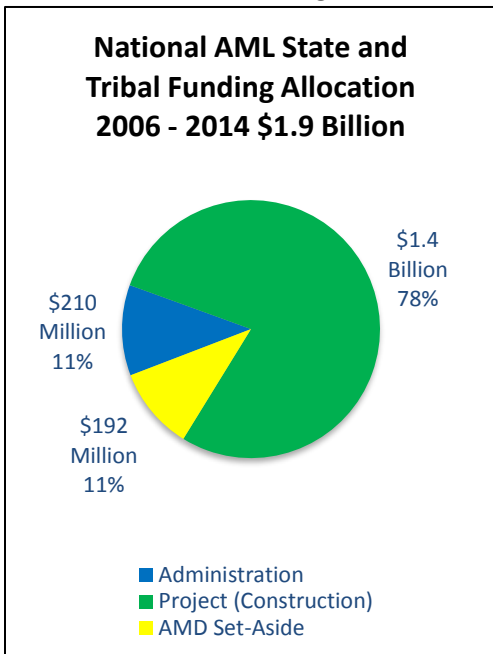
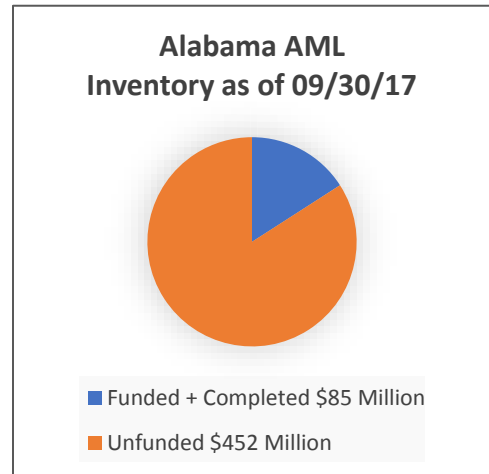
Despite these impressive accomplishments, \$192 million of high priority problems remain unreclaimed and still threaten the public health and safety. Reclamation by the State of Alabama AML Program is the only way these hazardous sites can be eliminated.

AML INVENTORY

AML Program personnel continually inventory and update land and water resources impacted by past mining (primarily coal mining). OSMRE maintains this national inventory (eAMLIS) which provides the information needed to implement SMCRA .

STATE AND TRIBAL AML PROGRAMS

The Alabama AML Program has been around since the early 1980's following the passage of SMCRA in 1977 and has demonstrated success to "promote the reclamation of mined areas left without adequate reclamation prior to August 3, 1977, and which continue, in their unreclaimed condition, to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, prevent or damage the beneficial use of land or water resources, or endanger the health or safety of the public."



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State and Tribal AML Programs are making significant and efficient nationwide progress with AML reclamation. They are providing timely responses to new abandoned mine hazards that arise, including emergencies. The AML Programs are excellent at public outreach and engage community partners in reclaiming the lands to meet the needs of the landowners and the communities. All reclamation projects comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and all other state and local regulations. Nationwide, the AML Programs are spending 78% of the AML grants on planning, engineering, construction and maintenance of AML Projects. This correlates to good paying jobs and reclaimed hazardous mine sites. The AML Programs on average have committed 11% of their annual grants to set aside programs specifically for acid mine drainage mitigation. The AML Programs are spending an approximate 11% on administration, which pays for staff time and the resources programs need to support AML work.ⁱ

PROGRAM LOSS

The AML Program provides significant economic, environmental, and public safety benefits to the citizens of Alabama. The loss of the Federal AML program will have significant negative impacts on the state including:

- Loss of over **\$91.0 Million** in future Federal Funding to support the AL AML Reclamation Program
- Loss of approximately **\$2 Million** annually contributed to Alabama's economy through construction of reclamation projects including salaries and state and local tax revenues.
- Numerous full-time jobs lost directly and indirectly resulting from loss of Federal Funding.

ⁱ Values provided by OSMRE's AML Closed Grants 2006 – 2012 (FBMS)