

make grants to, institutions, agencies, organizations, and individuals, and collect and make available information thereon.

APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 15. (a) There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

(b) All appropriations and donations made pursuant to this Act, and all permit fees or other charges paid pursuant to section 8 of this Act shall be credited to a special fund in the Treasury to be known as the Mined Lands Reclamation Fund. Such sums shall be available, without fiscal year limitation, for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

OTHER FEDERAL LAWS

SEC. 16. Nothing in this Act shall affect in any way the authority of the Secretary or heads of other Federal agencies under other provisions of law to include in any lease, license, permit, contract, or other instruments such conditions as may be appropriate to regulate surface mining operations and to reclaim surface mined areas on lands under their jurisdiction: *Provided*, That such conditions shall be at least equal to any law and regulation established under an approved State plan or to any regulation issued under section 8 of this Act for the State in which such lands are located. Each Federal agency shall cooperate with the Secretary and the States, to the greatest extent practicable, in carrying out the provisions of this Act.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D.C., March 8, 1968.

HON. HUBERT H. HUMPHREY,
President of the Senate, Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President: Enclosed is a draft of a proposed bill. "To provide for the cooperation between the Secretary of the Interior and the States with respect to the regulation of surface mining operations and the reclamation of surface mined areas, and for other purposes." Also enclosed is a brief explanation of its major provisions.

We recommend that this bill be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration, and we recommend that it be enacted. It will carry out the recommendations of President Johnson in his message on this subject.

This very important proposal is based upon the findings and recommendations of the National Surface Mine Study and the Interior report entitled "Surface Mining and Our Environment," which the President transmitted to the Congress on July 3, 1967.

The study revealed that 3.2 million acres of land have been affected by surface mining in the past. Furthermore, at the present time approximately 20,000 active surface mining operations are disturbing our land at a rate estimated to exceed 150,000 acres annually. In producing the minerals needed in our economy, it is estimated that by 1980 more than 5 million acres will have been affected by these operations.

While there are many mining companies with extensive current reclamation programs, data received from various sources indicate that, as recently as 1964, the amount of land being partially or completely reclaimed was approximately 30 percent of the area disturbed in that year. At the present time only 11 States have laws requiring the reclamation of surface mined lands, and unless measures are undertaken to insure reclamation of lands subject to surface mining in the future, our Nation's inventory of derelict lands will continue to grow. The study also showed that unreclaimed mined land is responsible in many instances for degradation of the environment through erosion, landslides, air and water pollution, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, and the creation of hazards to public health and safety.

In our report, we proposed that a national programs be undertaken which would include both the prevention of future damage to the land from surface mining and the repair of lands damaged by such mining in the past.

It was recommended that priority be given to Federal, State, and local programs for the prevention of future damage.