

STATEMENT OF GEORGE W. SALL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS,
NATIONAL COAL ASSOCIATION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, My name is George Sall. I am a mining engineer presently employed as Associate Director of Government Relations for National Coal Association which represents the principal commercial bituminous coal producers and sales companies throughout the nation.

In addition, I serve as director of the Mined-Land Conservation Conference, a division of National Coal, which was formed in 1963 to promote more emphatically the effective reclamation of surface-mined coal lands. We are proud that the report which generated the administration's bill now being considered by this committee had this to say about our efforts: "The Mined Land Conservation Conference has been particularly instrumental in promoting mined land reclamation programs among its members."

Members of NCA and MLCC are responsible for two-thirds of the coal produced in this country by surface mining methods.

Mr. Moody has described the impact of strip mining on the economy of the Nation and stressed the broad aspects of national energy demands, supplies and potentials. Mr. Phelps has explained why and how coal is strip mined. My purpose here today is to discuss and shed some needed light on what surface coal mine operators throughout the country are doing to reclaim strip mined land.

If, in the next few minutes, I seem to be accentuating the positive side of the reclamation story, please understand that it is not because we fail to recognize the need for continuing efforts in mined-land reclamation. It is rather because the negative aspects of the subject have been so greatly emphasized in recent years.

Were this not the case, your committee would not now be considering the legislation at issue.

Our public relations problem, insofar as reclamation is concerned, is really a two part problem: (1) when we do our job well, we don't get credit for it because no one realizes that land now producing a crop of timber, for example, was once harvested for a crop of energy. (2) The coal industry has simply lacked the funds and facilities to provide the public with all the facts about what is being done to reclaim mined land.

Recently, however, we have engaged in a modest advertising campaign which is beginning to produce results. Moreover, we have just completed a motion picture that vividly illustrates what is being done by the coal industry to reclaim strip-mined land. Called "The Reclaimers—A Story of Coal, Land and People," the film is being widely circulated. We extend a cordial invitation to members of this committee to view "The Reclaimers" at your convenience—either individually, or as a group.

Even better, of course, would be for you to visit some strip mines to see first hand what is being done. Should your various schedules allow, we would be especially pleased to arrange for such a visit—again, individually or as a group.

It is generally agreed that planned reclamation of strip-mined coal land began 50 years ago, in 1918, when surface coal miners in Indiana planted peach, apple, and pear trees on a mined area in Clay County.

Because Indiana is a pioneer state in the field of surface mining and land reclamation, it offers an excellent example of how the coal mining industry has been meeting its land conservation responsibilities over the years.

Statistics show that up to June 30, 1967, some 91,238 acres of coal land had been affected by strip mining in Indiana. Of this amount, some 75,911 acres have been reclaimed to forest and pasture land, including 23,318 acres which have been converted into state forest and other recreational areas, as well as private home sites. An additional 10,727 acres have been converted to lakes.

Thus, only 4,600 acres of all the land strip mined for coal in Indiana remained unreclaimed in mid 1967. And most of that can be attributed to land recently mined and still in the process of being reclaimed.

Turning to the State of Ohio, the Ohio Division of Forestry and Reclamation and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources have jointly reported that all of the land strip mined in the state from 1948—the year of the first Ohio strip mine law—through 1955 has been reclaimed. (See Table I.)