

STATEMENT OF WARD PADGETT, CHIEF MINE INSPECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF MINES, STATE OF OKLAHOMA; ACCOMPANIED BY THOMAS KISER, PRESIDENT, ORE PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION OF THE TRI-STATE AREA IN OKLAHOMA

Mr. PADGETT. Mr. Chairman and committee members, I have with me Mr. Thomas Kiser, president of the Ore Producers Association of the Tri-State Area in Oklahoma who may have a comment or statement to make after my presentation.

My name is Ward Padgett. I am chief inspector for the Department of Mines in Oklahoma. This morning early I received a letter from our Governor, which at this time I would like to read.

Since all segments of the mining industry in Oklahoma have shown their willingness to cooperate in implementation of our reclamation law, I see no reason to add additional burdens to the State by passing Federal reclamation legislation.

I feel that Oklahoma is capable and willing to exercise its responsibility in this area. Our law gives us the additional authority to adopt necessary regulations to carry out the content of the act.

Any additional information that the committee desires, I will be happy to supply.

Sincerely yours,

DEWEY F. BARTLETT, *Governor.*

In Oklahoma the mining industry became actively interested in the problem of opencut land reclamation early in 1965. Studies were begun, and many meetings were held with representatives from all segments of the industry—coal, copper, lead, zinc, crushed stone, sand and gravel, and so forth—working closely with my office and with interim legislative committees in drafting a proposed opencut land reclamation law.

When the draft was completed, these same people continued to work together in support of the passage of this legislation by the Oklahoma Legislature. This occurred in April 1967, and the law became effective January 1, 1968.

The representatives of the various segments of the mining industry in Oklahoma have shown their willingness to cooperate to the fullest extent possible in the proper and timely implementation of our reclamation law, and I have every reason to believe the industry will continue to give this kind of cooperation.

Oklahoma's Open Cut Land Reclamation Act is a very broad statute affecting all surface-mined minerals and giving the department of mines or other administering agency considerable leeway in making rules and regulations to accomplish the purposes of the statute.

Our law will deal adequately with the problems of reclamation. With the mining industry expressing and evidencing the kind of cooperation we have had in the past and have every reason to expect in the future, if additional legislation is needed, we are convinced we can rely on the industry for support and on our legislature to enact such necessary legislation.

Recognition of the problems created by opencut mining and the need for land reclamation are of recent origin. Over the last several years, more and more States have begun to look seriously at the problem and to try various methods of solution.