

5. We suggest that Section 7(b)(2) be amended to give a state 60 days in which to revise a previously approved plan as directed by the Secretary. Where the state agency believes new legislation is required, a longer period, up to 180 days, would be appropriate. S. 3132 requires such a revision "within a reasonable time"—a much too vague time period.

One highly significant difference between S. 3132 and S. 3126 is the former's neglect of reclamation needs on lands already surface-mined. We recognize that a meaningful reclamation program would be costly and that current budgetary pressures may prevent enactment of such a program at this time. (The final Department of the Interior report estimated that a basic reclamation program for all surface-mined lands would cost \$757 million, and that a more complete rehabilitation program would cost \$1.2 billion.)

Nevertheless, S. 3132 offers the Congress an opportunity to begin to develop a reclamation program for land already surface-mined.

TASK FORCE ON SURFACE MINE RECLAMATION POLICY

We recommend that the Congress authorize a one-year study by a Presidential task force to develop recommendations for such a reclamation program. We suggest that the task force report be centered around ways in which local, state, and federal governments could promote the reclamation of land previously surface-mined and, at the same time, derive the most direct public benefit from any public money so spent.

The task force could, for example, examine the relationship between reclamation and recreation opportunities, solid waste disposal problems, and employment needs.

The study could include identification of employment potential by areas, and by job skills which would be needed, and could be integrated with existing public and private manpower training and job-creating programs.

The task force could determine the extent to which the total costs of various public programs might be reduced by fostering these interrelationships. It could study ways in which surface-mined lands could be considered in state outdoor recreation plans, and how such lands might be purchased and developed with financial assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Open Space Land Program, and other federal and state programs. The task force could recommend funding arrangements, perhaps partly through royalties on mining operations, that could be used for a surface mine reclamation program.

Because of the broad nature of its mandate, the task force should include representatives from federal agencies such as HEW, Labor, OEO, HUD, Agriculture, and Interior, as well as the Bureau of the Budget, and representatives of state and local governments and the private sector.

DEMONSTRATION SURFACE MINE PROGRAM

In addition we suggest that the Congress authorize a demonstration program in cooperation with the states, to test ways in which mined-land reclamation can be integrated with social policies and programs. Such a demonstration program would be limited in scope. It might center around what the Department of the Interior's report noted are the widely scattered, privately owned surface mine sites appropriate only to state or local management after reclamation. Its object would be not only to reclaim the lands. It also would provide a mechanism for coordination of existing federal programs, along with federal planning assistance and supplemental federal incentive grants. Planning and administration of the actual reclamation program would be a state or local function.

Such a demonstration program might require:

1. The Governor to designate a single demonstration surface mine reclamation agency to plan and administer the state program.

2. Federal financial assistance for state planning and grants to supplement existing federal assistance programs.

3. A single federal officer to administer the demonstration program only, appointed by and responsible to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture. The administrator would assist the states in tying existing federal programs into the demonstration projects. He would, in addition, act as liaison between the states and the Presidential task force as useful lessons are learned.

We therefore urge the committee to authorize the creation of a Presidential task force for the purposes outlined above and to authorize a demonstration surface mine reclamation program to encourage and assist pilot projects looking toward broad public use of unreclaimed surface-mined land.