

SECTION 102 - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

[30 U.S.C. 1202]

It is the purpose of this Act to -

- (a) establish a nationwide program to protect society and the environment from the adverse effects of surface coal mining operations;
- (b) assure that the rights of surface landowners and other persons with a legal interest in the land or appurtenances thereto are fully protected from such operations;
- (c) assure that surface mining operations are not conducted where reclamation as required by this Act is not feasible;
- (d) assure that surface coal mining operations are so conducted as to protect the environment;
- (e) assure that adequate procedures are undertaken to reclaim surface areas as contemporaneously as possible with the surface coal mining operations;
- (f) assure that the coal supply essential to the Nation's energy requirements, and to its economic and social well-being is provided and strike a balance between protection of the environment and agricultural productivity and the Nation's need for coal as an essential source of energy;
- (g) assist the States in developing and implementing a program to achieve the purposes of this Act;
- (h) promote the reclamation of mined areas left without adequate reclamation prior 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;
- (i) assure that appropriate procedures are provided for the public participation in the development, revision, and enforcement of regulations, standards, reclamation plans, or programs established by the Secretary or any State under this Act;
- (j) provide a means for development of the data and analyses necessary to establish effective and reasonable regulation of surface mining operations for other minerals;
- (k) encourage the full utilization of coal resources through the development and application of underground extraction technologies;
- (l) stimulate, sponsor, provide for and/or supplement present programs for the conduct of research investigations, experiments, and demonstrations, in the exploration, extraction, processing, development, and production of minerals and the training of mineral engineers and scientists in the field of mining, minerals resources, and technology, and the establishment of an appropriate research and training center in various States; and

(m) wherever necessary, exercise the full reach of Federal constitutional powers to insure the protection of the public interest through effective control of surface coal mining operations.