

Supporting Statement A
30 CFR 874.16 – Contractor Eligibility and the
Abandoned Mine Land Contractor Information Form

OMB Control Number: 1029-0119

Terms of clearance: None

Introduction

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) submits this request for renewed approval to collect information necessary to implement 30 CFR 874.16, Contractor Eligibility, under Part 874, General Reclamation Requirements. Part 874 contains the regulatory requirements that implement OSMRE's Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program.

OSMRE's regulation at 30 CFR 874.16 requires that every successful bidder for an AML contract must be eligible at the time of the contract award under the permit eligibility rules at 30 CFR 773.12, 773.13, and 773.14. This connection to our permit eligibility rules means a successful bidder for an AML contract is subject to the same eligibility rules as an applicant for a surface coal mining permit. This requirement applies to all AML contractors employed under an AML project. It is under the permit eligibility requirements that successful bidders for AML contracts and State AML contracting officers and program staff incur information collection burdens.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) previously approved our request for continued information collection for the two-page form, the AML Contractor Information Form, as the instrument to collect information from successful bidders. OMB has assigned control number 1029-0119 for approved information collection under 30 CFR 874.16. We now seek OMB's approval to continue this information collection and to continue to use the AML Contractor Information Form.

The statutory authority governing information disclosure requirements for applicants for permits, and therefore, AML contractors, is section 507(b) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, as amended (SMCRA or the Act). The statutory authority for permit eligibility determinations is section 510(c) of the Act.

General Instructions

A completed Supporting Statement A must accompany each request for approval of a collection of information. The Supporting Statement must be prepared in the format described below, and must contain the information specified below. If an item is not applicable, provide a brief explanation. When the question "Does this ICR contain surveys, censuses, or employ statistical methods?" is checked "Yes," then a Supporting Statement B must be completed. OMB reserves the right to require the submission of additional information with respect to any request for approval.

Specific Instructions

Justification

1. *Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.*

Section 874.16 of 30 CFR 874 requires that every successful bidder for an AML contract must be eligible under sections 773.12, 773.13, and 773.14, of OSMRE's rules for permit eligibility, at the time of contract award. Therefore, a successful bidder for an AML contract may not be awarded the contract if the successful bidder is associated with an unabated or uncorrected violation of SMCRA. Successful bidders must be eligible for a permit. They must also disclose information comparable to that required from applicants for permits. Designated AML contracting officers and AML staff in State programs and in OSMRE's Field Offices are required to obtain an eligibility evaluation for each successful bidder before an AML contract is awarded. The OSMRE's Applicant/Violator System (AVS) Office (AVSO) performs AML eligibility evaluations and maintains most of the database records. OSMRE's internal procedures for performing evaluations, assisting States in implementing the requirements for contractor eligibility, creating and maintaining information in the AVS, and assisting potential contractors with their information collection activities are found in the AVS Office's Standard Operating Procedures handbook. The statutory authorities for these eligibility and information collection requirements are sections 507 and 510 of the Act.

2. *Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection. Be specific. If this collection is a form or a questionnaire, every question needs to be justified.*

Since 2000, the AVSO has used the AML Contractor Information Form, approved by OMB, to collect the information required from every successful bidder in order to assess its eligibility for an AML contract. The information required in the form, except for information specific to coal mining operations, is based on the minimum requirements for legal, financial, compliance and related information required from applicants for surface coal mining permits. The information is used, in addition to other available information, to determine if a successful bidder for an AML contract is eligible under OSMRE's rules for permit eligibility. The following is a description of the requirements of each of the four parts of the AML Contractor Information Form.

Part A collects general contact information from the successful bidder. The successful bidder must disclose their business name, address, telephone number, taxpayer identification number, , and email address.

Part B requires the successful bidder to obtain their business' Entity Organizational Family Tree (OFT) for certification purposes. The successful bidder must contact the AVSO or access the AVS from their personal computer by visiting <https://avss.osmre.gov>.

Part C requires the successful bidder to certify as to the accuracy and completeness of its information that already may be in the Applicant/Violator System (AVS). The AVS is OSMRE's nationwide database of entity, business structure, affiliation, permit history, and violation information. The requirement in Part C allows successful bidders the same benefit as applicants for surface coal mining permits by certifying existing information by way of certified reference to the AVS. The first choice for a successful bidder is to certify that all of the information currently in AVS is accurate, complete, and up to date. The second choice for a successful bidder is to certify that part of the information currently in the AVS is accurate, complete, and up to date. Selecting option two is an indication that changes are needed in the AVS. The third choice is for the successful bidder to certify that there is currently no information for it in the AVS.

Part D requires the successful bidder to either provide additional and complete information if the bidder has certified that part of the information in the AVS is missing or incomplete or acknowledge there is no information for the bidder in the AVS and then provide all information necessary to add the business to AVS.

3. *Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden and specifically how this collection meets GPEA requirements.*

Successful bidders for AML contracts may obtain the AML Contractor Information Form from the AVS Office's Internet web site: (<https://www.osmre.gov/programs/AVS.shtm>). They may also obtain the form from their contracting officer or the AVS Office.

In order to provide the information required by the AML Contractor Information Form the successful bidders must: (1) obtain a report from AVS of their business affiliations Entity OFT, (2) base their certification in Part C on this report, and (3) attach it to their submission of the AML Contractor Information Form. Successful bidders may obtain their OFT from the AVS website, their contracting officer, or the AVS Office.

State and OSMRE contracting officers may transmit a request for an AML eligibility evaluation of a successful bidder or contractor from the AVS Office using fax or email. AML contracting officers submit virtually 100% of their requests via email.

4. *Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.*

No similar information specific to successful bidders for AML contracts is collected by other State or Federal agencies. Only OSMRE's AVS Office uses the information to perform eligibility evaluations for successful bidders on AML contracts.

5. *If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.*

Although most contractors are considered small businesses the form is designed to minimize burden by ensuring previously known information does not need to be re-entered but is simply updated with any necessary corrections to existing information. If the successful bidder can certify that the current information in the AVS is accurate and complete, the successful bidder need only complete page one part of the form. When the AVS Office receives information from first-time AML contractors, staff explain the step-by-step process which includes informing why the information is required providing them with an informational brochure titled "AVS and the AML Contractor.

6. *Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.*

The information is only collected as required and only from successful bidders. Therefore, the frequency of collection has little scope to reduce the annual frequency. Less frequent collection of the information would result in non-compliance with section 874.16 of our regulations which could result in companies that are associated with violations receiving federal funding for AML reclamation.

7. *Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:*
- * requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;*
 - * requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;*
 - * requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;*
 - * requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;*
 - * in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;*
 - * requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;*
 - * that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or*
 - * requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information, unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.*

Guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2) are not exceeded.

8. *If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and in response to the PRA statement associated with the collection over the past three years, and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.*

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every three years — even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

Contact respondents were identified for whom were successful bidders and filed as contractors during the most recent period (FY 2024) listed below:

Shannon & Willson Inc.
2043 Westport Center Drive
St. Louis, MO 63146

High Altitude Reclamation LLC
39230 Stewart Mesa Road,
Paonia CO 81428

Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
Cambria District Office
286 Industrial Park Road
Ebensburg, Pennsylvania 15931

Feedback received indicated no concerns for use of the form with the instructions and estimates for preparing the AML Contractor Information Form are accurate and reasonable. The timeliness and accuracy of the AML eligibility evaluations were sufficient as well.

On August 28, 2024, OSMRE published in the Federal Register (89 FR 68928) a notice requesting comments from the public regarding the need for the collection of information, the accuracy of the burden estimate, ways to enhance the information collection, and ways to

minimize the burden on respondents. This notice gave the public 60 days in which to comment. However, no comments were received.

9. *Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.*

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents beyond that authorized under the approval to conduct AML reclamation work.

10. *Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.*

No assurance of confidentiality is provided, and none is required.

11. *Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.*

Sensitive questions are not asked.

12. *Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:*

** Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.*

** If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.*

** Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here.*

a. Burden Hours for Respondents

The following table shows the estimated number of responses and the burden hours for all respondents based on annual submissions. The average annual number of successful bidder responses increased to 228, an increase from 177 previously estimated. The increase largely a result of additional funding for the AML program which in turn increased the number of

contractor submission bids.

	Successful Bidder Responses	Hours per response	State Responses	Hours per response	Total Contractor Hours	Total State Hours	Total Hours
Accurate, Complete and up-to-date information	128	0.25			32		32
Part of the information is missing or incomplete	44	0.5			22		22
No information currently in AVS	56	1			56		56
State evaluations			15	1		15	15
Total	228		15		110	15	125

According to recent submissions respondents that already have complete and up-to-date information of which there are 128, requires 15 minutes (0.25 hours) to complete the AML Contractor Information Form. Among respondents with missing or incomplete are an estimated 44 bidder responses that are in the AVS database. Based on feedback from those respondents identified in item 8, it will require 30 minutes (0.5 hours) for these respondents to complete the AML Contractor Information Form. There are an estimated 56 bidder submissions with no current information existing in the AVS database. In those cases, respondents require on average 1 hour to complete the AML Contractor Information Form. Therefore, the information collection burden for these respondents is 56 hours.

The burden per submission estimates remains the same from our previous burden per response estimates for each part of the form. Therefore, for total information collection burden for all successful bidder responses processed through the AVS office amounts to 110 hours (32 hours for no additional information + 22 hours for partial information + 56 hours for complete information).

States create and maintain their own successful bidder and contractor information in AVS and additionally perform their own AML eligibility evaluations. States perform an estimated 15 eligibility evaluations during a year, an increase from 11 previously determined. This increase in evaluation corresponds to an increase in the number of applicant bidders. Based on information provided by the States identified in item 8, we estimate each State response will require 1 hour to create and maintain data in the AVS for successful bidders and contractors. As a result, the

burden for State AML program is 15 hours (15 bidder/contractor information maintained in AVS by States x 1 hour per bidder/contractor).

Therefore, the total information collection burden for this activity is 125 hours (110 hours for successful bidder and contractor respondents + 15 hours for State respondents).

b. Estimated Wage Cost to Respondents

OSMRE uses the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) figures for calculating cost burden placed on respondents and on the Federal government. These figures are derived for mining companies found at http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/naics4_212100.htm and for State government employees found at http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/naics4_999200.htm#b17-0000. We have included benefits into our hourly wage calculations. We use a 1.4 multiplier for benefits for industry workers, and a 1.6 multiplier for government employees based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics news release USDL-24-1863, dated September 10, 2024, Employer Costs for Employee Compensation – June 2024 (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/eccec.pdf>).

Typically, the AML contractor bidder employs a compliance officer for company information for contracting. The hourly base wage for this occupational class is \$47.20 per hour (BLS) and \$66.08 per hour with benefits (1.4). For industry to prepare the AML Contractor Information Form annually it would cost in total \$7,269 (\$66.08 per hour x 110 hours rounded).

In addition, we determine that a State financial officer will perform work requiring one hour requesting AML eligibility evaluations from OSMRE and processing the findings. The base hourly wages for this state occupation class is \$40.93 (BLS) and \$65.49 including benefits (1.6). The cost to all state respondents is therefore \$982 (\$65.49 per hour x 15 hours rounded).

The total wage cost to all respondents is \$8,251 (\$7,269 +\$982).

13. *Provide an estimate of the total annual non-hour cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected in item 12.)*
- * The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life) and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information (including filing fees paid for form processing). Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, a47ng other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.*
 - * If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents*

(fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.

** Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government, or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.*

a. Annual Capital and Start-up Costs

The information collection requirements of this activity do not involve any capital or start-up costs apart from expenditures associated with customary business practices.

b. Operation and Maintenance Costs

There are no significant or distinct non-wage operations or maintenance costs associated with compliance with the information requirements for this section.

14. *Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.*

OSMRE reviews each submission (228) requiring either new data entries or updating existing records in the AVS database. Based on this work requirement it is estimated to take 1 hour on average to review the AML Contractor Information Form, perform any necessary updates or make corrections in the AVS, and perform the eligibility evaluation for each request.

OSMRE calculates employee costs using Federal employee pay tables from the Office of Personnel Management's website at https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2024/RUS_h.pdf.

Federal wage is based on a salary of a GS 13, step 5 employee performing this work. The hourly base wage rate is \$56.16 per hour or \$89.86 per hour including benefits (1.6 multiplier). The annual cost to the Federal government is \$20,488 (\$89.86 per hour x 228 hours).

15. *Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments in hour or cost burden.*

This is a request for continued approval of information collection activities and use of our AML Contractor Information Form. The total estimated information collection burden is estimated to be 125 hours. We estimate an adjustment in the burden hours for successful bidders and contractors due to an overall increase in use from 177 bidders previously to 228 currently as program funding has increased resulting in a greater number of contractor bidders. The estimated change in burden hours is shown below.

96 hours currently approved
+ 29 hours as an adjustment due to increased program funding
125 hours requested.

16. *For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.*

OSMRE has no plans to publish this information.

17. *If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.*

OSMRE will display the OMB control number and expiration date on the AML Contractor Information Form upon approval by OMB and will continue using the form.

18. *Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."*

We claim no exemption.