

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 451 of 1994

324.63530 Total or partial release of performance bond or deposit; application; notice; publication; contents; inspection and evaluation of reclamation work; notification of decision; reclamation schedule; disapproval of application; notifying county clerk of filed application; written objections; public hearings; notice.

Sec. 63530.

(1) The permittee may file a request with the department for the release of all or part of a performance bond or deposit. Within 30 days after submission of an application for bond or deposit release to the department, the permittee shall submit a copy of the notice to be published by the department for 4 consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the locality of the surface coal mining operation. The notice is part of the bond release application and shall contain a notification of the precise location of the land affected, the number of acres, the permit and the date approved, the amount of the bond filed and the portion sought to be released, and the type and appropriate dates of reclamation work performed, and a description of the results achieved as they relate to the permittee's reclamation plan. In addition, as part of any bond release application, the applicant shall submit copies of letters that the applicant has sent to adjacent property owners and local units of government notifying them of the application to seek release from the bond.

(2) Within 30 days after the applicant complies with subsection (1), the department shall conduct an inspection and evaluation of the reclamation work involved. The evaluation shall consider, among other things, the degree of difficulty to complete any remaining reclamation, whether pollution of surface and subsurface water is occurring, the probability of continuance of future occurrence of the pollution, and the estimated cost of abating the pollution. The department shall notify the permittee, in writing, of its decision to release or not to release all or part of the performance bond or deposit based on the criteria in subsection (3) within 60 days from the filing of the request, if a public hearing is not held, and, if a public hearing is held, within 30 days after the hearing.

(3) The department may release the bond or deposit in whole or in part if the reclamation covered by the bond or deposit or portion of the reclamation has been accomplished as required by this part according to the following schedule:

(a) If the permittee completes the backfilling, regrading, and drainage control of a bonded area in accordance with the reclamation plan, the release of 60% of the bond or collateral for the applicable permit area.

(b) If revegetation has been established on the regraded mined lands in accordance with the reclamation plan, the department may release an additional portion of the bond or deposit. In determining the amount of the bond or deposit to be released after successful revegetation has been established, the department shall retain the amount of the bond or deposit that is sufficient for a third party to establish revegetation and for the period specified for permittee responsibility in section 63527(2)(t). No part of the bond or deposit shall be released under this subdivision if the land to which the release would be applicable is contributing suspended solids to streamflow or runoff outside the permit area in excess of the requirements of section 63527(2)(j) or until soil productivity for agricultural land has returned to equivalent levels of yield as nonmined land of the same soil type in the surrounding area under equivalent management practices as determined from the soil survey performed pursuant to section 63516(1)(n). If a silt dam is to be retained as a permanent impoundment pursuant to section 63527(2)(h), the portion of bond may be released under this subdivision if provisions for sound future maintenance have been made with the department.

(c) If the permittee has successfully completed all surface coal mining and reclamation activities, the release of the remaining portion of the bond, but not before the expiration of the period specified for permittee responsibility in section 63527(2)(t). However, at least 25% of the bond or deposit shall be retained by the department until all reclamation requirements of this part are fully met.

(4) If the department disapproves the application for release of the bond or deposit or a portion of the bond or deposit, it shall notify the permittee, in writing, stating the reasons for disapproval, recommending corrective actions necessary to secure the release, and allowing opportunity for a public hearing.

(5) When an application for total or partial bond or deposit release is filed with the department, the department shall notify the county clerk of each county in which the surface coal mining operation is located by certified mail within 10 days after the application for the release of all or a portion of the bond or deposit is filed.

(6) A person with a legal interest or other interest that might be adversely affected by release of the bond or deposit or a federal or state agency or local unit of government is entitled to file written objections to the proposed release from bond or deposit with the department within 30 days after the last publication of the notice provided in subsection (1). If written objections are filed, the department shall conduct a public hearing on the objections and inform all the interested parties of the time and place of the hearing and hold the hearing in the locality of the surface coal mining operation within 30 days. Notice of the date, time, and location of the public hearings shall be

published by the department in a newspaper of general circulation in the locality for 2 consecutive weeks.

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