

B. The Federal Regulations Implementing the Energy Policy Act

On March 31, 1995, OSM promulgated regulations at 30 CFR Part 817 to implement the performance standards of sections 720(a)(1) and (2) of SMCRA (60 FR 16722).

30 CFR 817.112(c)(2) required in part that:

The permittee must promptly repair, or compensate the owner for, material damage resulting from subsidence caused to any noncommercial building or occupied residential dwelling or structure related thereto that existed at the time of mining. * * * The requirements of this paragraph apply only to subsidence-related damage caused by underground mining activities conducted after October 24, 1992.

30 CFR 817.41(j) requires in part that:

The permittee must promptly replace any drinking, domestic or residential water supply that is contaminated, diminished or interrupted by underground mining activities conducted after October 24, 1992, if the affected well or spring was in existence before the date the regulatory authority received the permit application for the activities causing the loss, contamination of interruption.

Alternative OSM enforcement decisions. 30 CFR 843.25 provides that by July 31, 1995, OSM will decide, in consultation with each State regulatory authority with an approved program, how enforcement of the new requirements will be accomplished. As discussed in the April 7, 1995, **Federal Register** (60 FR 17743) and as reiterated below, enforcement could be accomplished through the 30 CFR Part 732 State program amendment process, or by State, OSM, or joint State and OSM enforcement of the requirements.

(1) *State program amendment.* If the State's promulgation of regulatory provisions that are counterpart to 30 CFR 817.41(j) and 817.121(c)(2) is imminent, the number and strong underground mines that have operated in the State since October 24, 1992, is low, the number of complaints in the State concerning section 720 of SMCRA is low, or the State's investigation of subsidence-related complaints has been thorough and complete so as to assure prompt remedial action, then OSM will provide any to directly enforce the Federal provisions in the State. In this situation, the State would enforce its State statutory and regulatory provisions once it has amended its program to be in accordance with the revised SMCRA and to be consistent with the revised Federal regulations. This program revision process, which is addressed in the Federal regulations at 30 CFR Part 732, is commonly referred to as the State program amendment process.

(2) *State enforcement.* If the State has statutory or regulatory provisions in place that correspond to all of the requirements of the above-described Federal regulations at 30 CFR 817.41(j) and 817.121(c)(2) and the State has authority to implement is statutory and

regulatory provisions for all underground mining activities conducted after October 24, 1992, then the State would enforce its provisions for these operations.

(3) *Interim direct OSM enforcement.* If the State does not have any statutory or regulatory provisions in place that correspond to the requirements of the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 817.41(j) and 817.121(c)(2), then OSM would enforce in their entirety 30 CFR 817.41(j) and 817.121(c)(2) for all underground mining activities conducted in the State after October 24, 1992.

(4) *State and OSM enforcement.* If the State has statutory or regulatory provisions in place that correspond to some but not all of the requirements of the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 817.41(j) and 817.121(c)(2) and the State has authority to implement its provisions for all underground mining activities conducted after October 24, 1992, then the State would enforce its provisions for these operations. OSM would then enforce those provisions of 30 CFR 817.41(j) and 817.121(c)(2) that are not covered by the State provisions for these operations.

If the State has statutory or regulatory provisions in place that correspond to some but not all of the requirements of the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 817.41(j) and 817.121(c)(2) and if the State's authority to enforce its provisions applies to operations conducted on or after some date later than October 24, 1992, the State would enforce its provisions for these operations on and after the provisions' effective date. OSM would then enforce 30 CFR 817.41(j) and 817.121(c)(2) to the extent the State statutory and regulatory provisions do not include corresponding provisions applicable to all underground mining activities conducted after October 24, 1992; and OSM would enforce those provisions of 30 CFR 817.41(j) and 817.121(c)(2) that are included in the State program but are not enforceable back to October 24, 1992, for the time period from October 24, 1992, until the effective date of the State's rules.

As described in items (3) and (4) above, OSM could directly enforce in total or in part the applicable Federal regulatory provisions until the State adopts and OSM approves under 30 CFR Part 732, the State's counterparts to the required provisions. However, as discussed in item (1) above, OSM could decide not to initiate direct Federal enforcement but rather to rely instead on the 30 CFR Part 732 State program amendment process.

In those situations where OSM determined that direct Federal enforcement was necessary, the ten-day notice provisions of 30 CFR 843.12(a)(2) would not apply. That is, when on the basis of a Federal inspection OSM determined that a violation of 30 CFR 817.41(j) or 817.121(c)(2) existed, OSM would issue a notice of violation or cessation under without first sending a ten-day notice to the State.

Also under direct Federal enforcement, the provisions of 30 CFR

817.121(c)(4) would apply. This regulation states that if damage to any noncommercial building or occupied residential dwelling or structure related thereto occurs as a result of earth movement within an area determined by projecting a specified angle of draw from the outermost boundary of any underground mine workings to the surface of the land (normally a 30 degree angle of draw), a rebuttable presumption exists that the permittee caused the damage.

Lastly, under direct Federal enforcement, OSM would also enforce the new definitions at 30 CFR 701.5 of "drinking, domestic or residential water supply," "material damage," "non-commercial building," "occupied dwelling and structures related thereto," and "replacement of water supply" that were adopted with the new underground mining performance standards.

OSM would enforce 30 CFR 817.41(j), 817.121(c)(2) and (4), and 30 CFR 701.5 for operations conducted after October 24, 1992.

C. Enforcement in Virginia

Virginia program activity, requirements, and enforcement. By letter to Virginia dated December 14, 1994, OSM requested information that would be useful in determining how to implement section 720(a) of SMCRA and the implementing Federal regulations in Virginia (Administrative Record No. VA-850). By letter dated January 13, 1995, Virginia responded to this request (Administrative Record No. VA-851).

Virginia indicated that existing State program provisions at Sections 45.1-243 and 45.1-258 of the Code of Virginia are adequate State counterparts to section 720(a) of SMCRA. Virginia explained that it will enforce these State program provisions effective October 24, 1992. Virginia also provided a copy of DMLR memorandum 6-93 concerning intermediate guidelines for implementing the Virginia law until implementing Virginia regulations are approved. Section 480-03-19.817.121(c)(2) of the Virginia Coal Surface Mining Reclamation Regulations concerning subsidence control has been used by Virginia since December 26, 1990.

OSM records show that approximately 325 underground coal mines have been classified as active in Virginia since October 24, 1992. Between October 24, 1992, and January 13, 1995, Virginia investigated 262 citizen complaints alleging subsidence-caused structural damage or water supply loss or contamination as a result