

Abandoned Mine Lands Program

DEP's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation ([BAMR](#)) administers and oversees the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program in Pennsylvania. BAMR is responsible for resolving abandoned mine land (AML) problems such as mine fires, mine subsidence, dangerous highwalls, open shafts and portals, mining impacted water supplies and other hazards which have resulted from past coal mining practices in accordance with requirements established by the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement ([OSMRE](#)) under authority of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) (PL 95-87, as amended).

AML funding is provided to Pennsylvania through grants from OSMRE. SMCRA requires that active coal operators pay an AML fee on each ton of coal mined. OSM collects the fee and distributes it through annual grants to the AML states and tribes according to a distribution formula established in the law. Collection of the AML fee is currently authorized by SMCRA through federal fiscal year (FY) 2021. Additionally, BAMR created a [Program Fact Sheet](#) in 2019 entitled "*Pennsylvania's Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act Funded Abandoned Mine Lands Program: Past, Present, and Future*".

Over the last 10 years, Pennsylvania has received just over \$500 million in AML grant funding. SMCRA allows AML Programs to set-aside up to 30% of their AML grants into an [AMD Set-Aside](#) account for the treatment or abatement of abandoned mine drainage (AMD) in Qualified Hydrologic Units (QHUs) as defined within SMCRA. From the AML grant funding received by over the last 10 years, Pennsylvania has set-aside just over \$100 million. The AML Program has awarded reclamation contracts using AML Program, AMD Set-Aside, [AML Pilot Program](#), [Growing Greener](#), and State Capital Budget funds.

Currently, there are nine (9) active AMD treatment plants in operation and a tenth treatment plant design for Wehrum/Blacklick Creek (Indiana County) nearing completion. The Quakake Tunnel/Black Creek (Carbon County) and the Gladden Discharge/Chartiers Creek (Allegheny County) treatment plants are in design. The Little Conemaugh (Cambria County), Coal Creek/Tioga River (Tioga County) and Dark Shade Creek (Somerset County) treatment plants are all in the development stage. There are 46 passive AMD treatment systems that were constructed or designed by BAMR which are maintained through AMD Set-Aside funds, a subcategory of AML funds. The Keystone Passive Treatment System (Westmoreland County) and the Marsolino/Neumeyer-Poplar Run Passive Treatment System (Fayette County) were constructed/rehabilitated by BAMR in 2017 and the Kalp and Melcroft (Indian Creek) Passive Treatment Systems (Fayette County) were rehabilitated by BAMR in 2018. The rehabilitation of the Cucumber Run (Fayette County), Monastery Run (Westmoreland

County) and Oven Run “B” (Somerset County) Passive Treatment Systems is scheduled for 2020.

In state FY 2017-2018, BAMR spent \$5,721,391 of AMD Set-Aside funding on AMD treatment and \$938,567 on trust fund AMD treatment sites. In state FY 2018-2019, BAMR spent \$4,358,876 of AMD Set-Aside funding on AMD treatment and \$750,655 on the trust fund AMD treatment sites.

Beginning in 2016 and continuing through 2019, the federal government provided \$105 million in funding available through the U.S. Department of the Interior for projects in the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Economic Development Program ([AML Pilot](#)). This funding was designed to accelerate the remediation of AML and AMD sites with economic and community development end uses. Pennsylvania was awarded \$30 million in [2016](#); \$25 million in [2017](#); \$25 million in [2018](#); and \$25 million in 2019. A total of 42 projects are being funded (all or in part) with the 2016-2018 AML Pilot Program funding.

Section 18(j) of Pennsylvania’s Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act ([PA SMCRA](#)) allows DEP to award grants to eligible entities. Two types of grants can be applied for when using the Growing Greener application: Abandoned Mine Drainage Set-Aside Program grants and State SMCRA grants.

Abandoned Mine Drainage Set-Aside Program

The AMD abatement and treatment program (AMD Set-Aside Program) is authorized in Section 402(g)(6) of federal SMCRA. This grant program is for the abatement of abandoned mine drainage and/or treatment through treatment facility system construction. Grants may also be awarded for treatment system design or operation and maintenance of existing passive and active treatment systems. Projects must be in watersheds that are Qualified Hydrologic Units as defined in SMCRA. Table 1 shows the number of projects and funding for the period between 10/1/16 through 9/30/19.

Table 1. The number of projects and the funding amount for each grant year.

Grant Year	Number of projects	Funding
2016 List of Projects	2	\$68,858
2018 List of Projects	6	\$1,469,422

State SMCRA grants

The state SMCRA grants are part of DEP's Grant and Loan Program, which provides grants, loans, and rebates to assist individuals, groups, and businesses in addressing a host of environmental issues. The primary focus of the grant is to design, construct and/or rehabilitate treatment facilities on Alternate Bond System (ABS) Legacy AMD discharge sites. The grant can also be used for land reclamation on the same type of sites. To be eligible for this funding, criteria for the grant requires a discharge to be from an ABS Legacy site. There were no grants awarded in the 2015 Growing Greener Grant round but one grant was awarded in the [2016 Growing Greener Grant](#) round for \$414,650.