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# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Receives \$10 Million to Develop Abandoned Mine Land Sites**

**Big Stone Gap, Va.-** The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) will receive \$10 million to develop Abandoned Mine Land (AML) sites. The grant comes from the Power Plus Pilot Program which was part of the federal Omnibus Funding Bill. Projects completed with the funds will not only be designed to boost the economy of southwest Virginia's coalfields but will also improve the environment.

“We are ready to get to work and have a lot of information to offer to those selected to help us make the greatest economic impact with these funds,” said DMME Deputy Director Butch Lambert. “Our agency has been reclaiming abandoned mine lands for decades. This pilot program will allow us to focus on AML projects better suited for economic development.”

An AML inventory is currently available via the DMME [website](#) and lists features for each site. DMME will create a stakeholder workgroup made up of state economic and community development authorities to identify projects that meet the requirements of the Power Plus Pilot program and receive approval from the Office of Surface Mining.

The Abandoned Mine Land program was created after more thorough environmental laws were passed through the Surface Mining and Control Act in 1977. The program is charged with reclaiming sites that were mined before those laws were in place and that could be a hazard to the public and the environment.

DMME prioritizes those projects based on the severity and whether another entity is available to reclaim the site. The \$10 million will allow the agency to reclaim projects that may not have taken precedence before. The reclamation of these projects will have a focus of improving the economy of southwest Virginia with the added benefit of improving the environment.

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