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Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy's Abandoned Mine Land Program to receive $5.8 Million for 2018

Big Stone Gap, Va.- The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy's (DMME) Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program will receive $5.8 million in 2018 to reclaim abandoned mine lands across the Commonwealth.

"We have quite the inventory of projects in Virginia," said Abandoned Mine Land Projects Coordinator, Lesa Baker. "These funds will be prioritized to ensure the safety of our neighbors that live near these sites and to protect the environment."

The AML program was created after more thorough environmental laws were passed through the Surface Mining and Control Act in 1977. The program prioritizes sites based on human health and safety and is charged with reclaiming these sites. It is funded by reclamation fees paid by the coal industry based on the tons of coal mined.

An AML inventory is currently available via the DMME website and lists features for each site. A portion of the funds will also be set aside for emergency projects. From 2006 to 2014, DMME has completed $73,862,352.65 million in projects across areas of Virginia where coal was historically mined. The construction is contracted with local companies and has created 1,760 jobs in the same period of time.

While these funds will focus on projects that improve safety and the environment, in March 2017, DMME announced the AML program received $10 million to start a Pilot Program in which abandoned mines would be reclaimed for economic development Six proposed projects are currently being reviewed.

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