
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 123 Session of
1999

INTRODUCED BY HERSHEY, GEORGE, S. H. SMITH, SURRA, DeWEESE,
ARGALL, ARMSTRONG, BAKER, BARD, BASTIAN, BELFANTI, BUNT,
CAWLEY, CLYMER, M. COHEN, DALLY, FAIRCHILD, FARGO, FICHTER,
GEIST, GORDNER, GRUCELA, HALUSKA, HARHAI, HASAY, HENNESSEY,
HERMAN, HESS, LAUGHLIN, LEVDANSKY, LUCYK, LYNCH, MAHER,
MAJOR, McCALL, McILHATTAN, McNAUGHTON, MELIO, R. MILLER,
MUNDY, NAILOR, ORIE, PETRARCA, PIPPY, RAMOS, READSHAW,
ROBERTS, ROHRER, ROSS, RUBLEY, SAYLOR, SCHULER, SERAFINI,
SEYFERT, SHANER, SOLOBAY, STABACK, STAIRS, STERN, THOMAS,
TIGUE, TRELLO, YOUNGBLOOD, YUDICHAK AND ZUG, APRIL 13, 1999

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
APRIL 13, 1999

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the President of the United States and Congress to make
2 the more than \$1 billion of Federal moneys already earmarked
3 for abandoned mine reclamation available to states.

4 WHEREAS, The biggest water pollution problem facing this
5 Commonwealth today is polluted water draining from abandoned
6 coal mines; and

7 WHEREAS, Over half the streams that do not meet water quality
8 standards in this Commonwealth are affected by mine drainage;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth has over 250,000 acres of
11 abandoned mine lands, refuse banks and old mine shafts in 45 of
12 Pennsylvania's 67 counties, more than any other state in the
13 nation; and

14 WHEREAS, The Department of Environmental Protection estimates

1 it will cost more than \$15 billion to reclaim and restore
2 abandoned mine lands; and

3 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth now receives about \$20 million a
4 year from the Federal Government to do reclamation projects; and

5 WHEREAS, There is now a \$1 billion balance in the Federal
6 Abandoned Mine Reclamation Trust Fund that is set aside by law
7 to take care of pollution and safety problems caused by old coal
8 mines; and

9 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is the fourth largest coal producing
10 state in the nation, and coal operators contribute significantly
11 to the fund by paying a special fee for each ton of coal they
12 mine; and

13 WHEREAS, The Department of Environmental Protection and 39
14 county conservation districts through the Western and Eastern
15 Pennsylvania Coalitions for Abandoned Mine Reclamation have
16 worked as partners to improve the effectiveness of mine
17 reclamation programs; and

18 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is not seeking to rely on the Federal
19 appropriation to solve the abandoned mine lands problem in
20 Pennsylvania and is actively considering additional funding on
21 its own; and

22 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has been working with the Interstate
23 Mining Compact Commission, the National Association of Abandoned
24 Mine Land Programs and other states to free more of these funds
25 to clean up abandoned mine lands; and

26 WHEREAS, Making more funds available to states for abandoned
27 mine reclamation should preserve the interest revenues now being
28 made available for the United Mine Workers Combined Benefit
29 Fund; and

30 WHEREAS, The Federal Office of Surface Mining, the United

1 States Environmental Protection Agency and Congress have not
2 agreed to make more funds available to states for abandoned mine
3 reclamation; therefore be it

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania
5 urge the President of the United States and Congress make the \$1
6 billion of Federal moneys already earmarked for abandoned mine
7 land reclamation available to states to clean up and make safe
8 abandoned mine lands; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
10 the President of the United States, to the presiding officers of
11 each house of Congress and to each member of Congress.