

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 76

Session of  
2001

INTRODUCED BY M. WHITE, MUSTO, D. WHITE, LAVALLE, COSTA, CORMAN,  
HELFRICK, BOSCOLA, LOGAN, BODACK, O'PAKE, TARTAGLIONE, EARLL,  
KITCHEN, THOMPSON AND MELLOW, MAY 21, 2001

REFERRED TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, MAY 21, 2001

## A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the President and Congress of the United States to make  
2 the \$1.5 billion of Federal moneys already earmarked for  
3 abandoned mine reclamation available to states.

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

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

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

13 WHEREAS, The Department of Environmental Protection estimates  
14 it will cost more than \$15 billion to reclaim and restore  
15 abandoned mine lands; and

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

18 WHEREAS, There is now a \$1.5 billion balance in the Federal

1 Abandoned Mine Reclamation Trust Fund that is set aside by law  
2 to take care of pollution and safety problems caused by old coal  
3 mines; and

4 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is the fourth largest coal-producing  
5 state in the nation, and coal operators contribute significantly  
6 to the fund by paying a special fee for each ton of coal they  
7 mine; and

8 WHEREAS, The Department of Environmental Protection and 39  
9 county conservation districts through the Western and Eastern  
10 Pennsylvania Coalitions for Abandoned Mine Reclamation have  
11 worked as partners to improve the effectiveness of mine  
12 reclamation programs; and

13 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is not seeking to rely on the Federal  
14 appropriation to solve the abandoned mine lands problem in this  
15 Commonwealth and has enacted the Growing Greener program which  
16 has provided additional money for mine reclamation activities;  
17 and

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

22 WHEREAS, Making more funds available to states for abandoned  
23 mine reclamation should preserve the interest revenues now being  
24 made available for the United Mine Workers Combined Benefit  
25 Fund; and

26 WHEREAS, The Federal Office of Surface Mining, the United  
27 States Environmental Protection Agency and the Congress have not  
28 agreed to make more funds available to states for abandoned mine  
29 reclamation; therefore be it

30 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

1 urge the President and Congress of the United States to make the  
2 \$1.5 billion of Federal moneys already earmarked for abandoned  
3 mine land reclamation available to states to clean up and make  
4 safe abandoned mine lands; and be it further

5       RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to  
6 the President of the United States, to the presiding officers of  
7 each house of Congress and to each member of Congress from  
8 Pennsylvania.