

Hearing on H.R. 3844 to establish energy and minerals reclamation foundation November 4, 2015

The House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a legislative hearing on November 4 to review proposed mining actions, including two bills concerning Good Samaritan cleanups. One of the bills addressed was the Energy and Minerals Reclamation Foundation Establishment Act (H.R. 3844), introduced by Representative Jody Hice (R-GA) on October 28. H.R. 3844 would launch a foundation to aid cleanup of abandoned mine lands and oil and gas well sites on federal and non-federal lands.

The Energy and Minerals Reclamation Foundation would receive seed funding from the federal government and thereafter, the federal government would provide funds to match donations to the Foundation. H.R. 3844 was considered along with H.R. 3843, the Locatable Minerals Claim Location and Maintenance Fees Act, which authorizes the establishment of an EPA program to protect Good Samaritan cleanup liability issues by amending the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act's liability protections. H.R. 3844 and H.R. 3843 are now waiting for committee action.

The subcommittee's ranking member, Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), stated in the hearing that although the bills do not fully solve the issues facing Good Samaritan cleanup initiatives, they are a step in the right direction. Ideas were brought forth throughout the hearing stating that the foundation bill should include greater input from conservationists and individual landowners.

Sources: house.gov, congress.gov, eenews
