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HOUSE BILL NO. 1688

Offered January 13, 1999

A BILL to amend and reenact § 45.1-235 of the Code of Virginia, relating to surface mining permit applications.

Patron—Kilgore

Referred to Committee on Mining and Mineral Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 45.1-235 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 45.1-235. Form and contents of permit application; fee.

A. Application for a surface mining permit shall be made to the Division in the format required by the Director and shall be signed and verified under oath by the person, or his legal representative, intending to engage in the surface mining of coal.

B. The application shall contain such information as shall be required by regulations adopted by the Director, including, but not limited to, the information required under the provisions of § 507 (b) of the federal act.

C. If the Director finds that the probable total annual production at all locations of any coal surface mining operator will not exceed 100,000 tons, the determination of probable hydrologic consequences and the statement of the result of the test borings or core samplings required under § 507 (b) of the federal act shall, upon the written request of the operator, be performed by a qualified public or private laboratory designated by the Director, and the cost of preparation of such determination and statement shall be assumed by the Division. To the extent that funds are available from the federal Office of Surface Mining, the Director shall provide for permit application assistance to small operators as provided in § 507 (c) and (h) of the federal act. Such assistance shall be provided in accordance with regulations adopted by the Director.

D. Each applicant for a permit shall be required to submit to the Division as part of the permit application an operations plan and a reclamation plan which shall meet the requirements of this chapter and regulations promulgated by the Director.

E. Each application for a coal surface mining permit issued under this chapter shall be accompanied by a fee of twelve dollars per acre for the area of land to be affected by the total operation for which plans have been submitted. An anniversary payment of six dollars per acre for areas disturbed under the permit shall be payable annually on the anniversary date of the permit. All fees collected under the provisions of this chapter shall be paid into a special fund of the Department to be used for the administration of the coal surface mining regulatory program and are hereby appropriated for that purpose.

F. Each applicant for a coal surface mining permit shall file a copy of his application for public inspection at an appropriate public office approved by the Director where the mining is proposed to occur. However, information which pertains only to the analysis of the chemical and physical property of the coal, excepting information regarding such mineral or elemental content which is potentially toxic in the environment, shall be kept confidential upon request of the applicant and not made a matter of public record.

G. Each applicant for a coal surface mining permit shall be required to submit to the Division as part of the permit application a certificate issued by an insurance company authorized to do business in the Commonwealth, certifying that the applicant has a public liability insurance policy in force for the surface mining and reclamation operations for which such permit is sought. Such policy shall provide for personal injury and property damage protection in an amount, not less than that specified in regulations adopted by the Director, adequate to compensate any persons damaged as a result of surface coal mining and reclamation operations, including use of explosives, and entitled by law to compensation under applicable provisions of law. Such policy shall be maintained in full force and effect during the terms of the permit or any renewal, and including the length of all reclamation operations. The Director is authorized to promulgate regulations which provide for the submission by the applicant of evidence of self-insurance, meeting the requirements of this subsection, in lieu of a certificate of a public liability insurance policy.

INTRODUCED

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