

WPCAMR Regional Coordinator's Report

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LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

STATE

Senate Bill #411 in the PA General Assembly

Earlier this year, Senate Bill #411 was introduced in the Senate. In a nutshell, that bill addresses liability issues for landowners and shale gas companies who wish to use AMD for gas well development. After some discussion with other organizations with which we partner, I understand that the language in the bill was re-worked to provide clarification on the extent of liability protection when using/transporting the AMD. The bill is not been re-introduced yet.

FEDERAL

SMCRA-Related

- S.222 and H.R. 488. Allowing for non-coal use of states' smcra grant funds.
- S. 468 introduced by Sen. Rockefeller (D-WV) and H.R. 980 introduced by Rep. Rahall (D-WV)—revival of CARE Act regarding use of accrued interest and excess treasury funds under Title IV to pay for UMW retirees.to expand coverage for miners who were impacted by recent bankruptcies, such as with Patriot Mining.
- OSM's FY2014 proposed budget: Two main actions, one to eliminate payments to certified states and tribes, next regards setting up a hardrock AML fee and program.
- MAP-21 raid last summer. Possible fix for MAP-21? This may affect actions on H.R.488 mentioned above.

Sequestration

- PA's annual AML grant down by ~10%. Uncertain as to whether that will be restored. Appears that sequestration will be part of FY2014.

Other Initiatives on the Federal Front

- Talk of a potential Good Samaritan Bill to help coalfield AML work. Nothing tangible yet.
- HR2218 sponsored by McKinley (R-WV)--encourage recovery and beneficial use of coal combustion residuals and establish requirements for the proper management and disposal of coal combustion residuals that are protective of human health and

the environment. As of 6/3/13, Status: Referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

- Mine Placement of CCRs – rule has begun the surname process at Interior. Then will proceed to OMB. OSM hopes to propose a rule by year's end.

MINE WATER USE

The Department apparently has received several proposals regarding the use of mine water but to my knowledge at this time, none of those have been implemented.

GOOD SAMARITAN PROTECTION

I've had several conversations with EPA staff over the past year regarding the need for Federal Environmental Good Samaritan protection for watershed groups, Conservation Districts, and others who run AMD treatment systems. It appears that they are beginning to understand our situation and talks have been very constructive. One of the items that came out of a recent conversation was the need for a meeting between regional/national environmental NGOs involved in Good Sam work, EPA, OSM, legislators, and industry (coal, gas). The idea behind the meeting would be to craft a needs statement regarding Good Sam. Once we have a unified message to present to EPA, we may be able to see some progress, either administratively, by EPA or if that doesn't work, to take the message as a community to Capitol Hill. WPCAMR is working with Amy Wolfe from Trout Unlimited to plan this summit, likely to be held in Washington, DC in mid to late fall of this year.

OTHER ITEMS

2013 Statewide AMR Conference

The 15th Annual Statewide AMR Conference was last week, August 8-10, 2013. The venue for the Conference was the Ramada Inn and Conference Center in State College. Attendance was lower this year with few watershed groups present.

We are beginning to plan out the 2014 conference which will be held at an earlier date than this year. The 2014 conference will be in conjunction with ARIPPA's annual meeting.

Anne will also provide more information on the activities surrounding the conference planning in her report.

Meetings

- 2013 AMR Conference, State College. Presentations on legislative update regarding SMCRA and co-presented another talk about the need for Federal Environmental Good Samaritan protection.
- ARIPPA fundraiser for EP and WPCAMR, State College.
- Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council (ITRC): In July, I was invited to continue working with the ITRC on drafting a guidance document regarding the use and applicability of biochemical reactors to treat mine water along with finalizing the section of the document about the need for Good Samaritan protection at a meeting in California.

2012 Financial Audit

The financial audit was completed by Henninger and Associates. I have prepared draft “Whistleblower” and “Conflict of Interest” policies for board review as recommended by our auditor. Overall, I think we did well on our audit.

Grants

Quick Response

I had a discussion with Pam Milavec, our advisor for Quick Response, about the need for applying for GG funding for Quick Response for this grant round. After looking at how much we have in grants not expended yet, we decided it would be best to not apply for GG funding for Quick Response this round. WPCAMR currently has about \$30,000 to expend to finish up Quick Response 5. Once we do that, we can begin expending funds from Quick Response 6 and QR7 (total of \$230,000).

319 Grant for 2014-2015

DEP’s 319 staff informed us that we won’t have to apply for this round of Growing Greener for our 319 grant for 2014 to 2015. They intend to, I believe, handle the grant as an extension of the 2013 -2014 grant.

ARIPPA Awards

Anne will present the recommendations for ARIPPA awards from the selection committee. Anne and I will be traveling to Harrisburg for the award presentations on August 21st.

New District Participation

WPCAMR staff thanks the Clarion Conservation District for hosting this quarterly meeting!

ARIPPA Fundraiser this Summer

We grateful to ARIPPA for having another golf fundraiser for WPCAMR. \$140.00 was donated to WPCAMR. The joint conference in June 2014 will provide another opportunity to raise funds for both the Eastern and Western coalitions.