

**Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Federal Program**

**FY2023 Request: \$3,200,000**

**Reference No: 6855**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation

**Project Type:** Life / Health / Safety

**Category:** Natural Resources

**Location:** Statewide

**House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)

**Impact House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)

**Contact:** Jashryn Mendoza

**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2027

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**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

The Legislature enacted the Alaska Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) in 1983 (AS.27.21). The act's primary purpose is to promote the reclamation of areas mined before the enactment of the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. Conditions on some of these mined areas could endanger public health and safety, have environmental implications, and prevent the beneficial use of or damage land and water resources. This federal grant program funds the inventory and remediation of abandoned coal mining sites and facilities under SMCRA guidelines.

<b>Funding:</b>	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>FY2028</u>	<u>Total</u>
1002 Fed Rcpts	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000		\$16,000,000
<b>Total:</b>	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000	\$3,200,000	\$0	\$16,000,000

- |   |   |                                       |   |   |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required | <input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing |
| 0% = Minimum State Match % Required           |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment    | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill |   |

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Prior Funding History / Additional Information:**

- Sec8 Ch1 SLA2021 P74 L27 HB69 \$3,200,000
- Sec5 Ch8 SLA2020 P66 L19 HB205 \$3,200,000
- Sec1 Ch3 SLA2019 P5 L13 SB19 \$3,200,000
- Sec1 Ch19 SLA2018 P7 L22 SB142 \$3,200,000
- Sec1 Ch1 SLA2017 P5 L26 SB23 \$3,200,000
- Sec1 Ch2 SLA2016 P5 L17 SB138 \$3,200,000
- Sec1 Ch38 SLA2015 P5 L17 SB26 \$3,200,000
- Sec1 Ch18 SLA2014 P57 L8 SB119 \$3,200,000
- Sec1 Ch16 SLA2013 P71 L12 SB18 \$3,000,000

**Project Description/Justification:**

The Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation (AML) program performs reclamation on qualifying sites within Alaska. For the next eight to 10 years, the program will focus on the reclamation of several highwalls located in the Healy Valley. Highwalls are created as result of strip mining; strip mining is the method commonly used to mine coal seams from the surface. Highwalls are vertical cliff like faces which were

left after the coal was extracted, and pose a threat to public health, safety, and general welfare by falling from a highwall cliff or by being hit from falling rock.

All funding for this program comes from federal grants; no general funds are required. This program contractually employs up to 75 Alaskans in private sector construction jobs each year.

The current AML project is Phase I of the Cripple Creek Pit and it is expected to be complete in the early summer of 2022. The AML program has been reclaiming a series of abandoned strip mines near Healy, Alaska. These pits are located on State land and they have been given a high priority by the Governor's office to be reclaimed. The AML program has been working to reclaim the state's abandoned mine inventory since the early 1980's and the Cripple Pit is currently the focus. The AML program must work on reclamation projects each summer to keep federal grants active and not expire. The program has three years in which to spend grant money.

Operating costs for the AML program are determined by a combination of salaried program staff and construction costs. The AML program currently has 3.5 full time employees on staff including two Engineering Assistant II's, one Engineering Associate, and .5 of an Administrative Assistant.

Construction costs for reclamation work are ultimately decided by the size and scope of a project. Program staff work on reclamation designs and are responsible for estimating project costs based on engineering and earth science practices. Large scale projects are then put out to bid and follow all State required procurement procedures.

### **What was accomplished with prior funding?**

(2021) Construction on Phase I of the Cripple Creek project resumed in mid-May 2021 and continued through the duration of the field season, early October. AML staff are also working on designs for Phase II of the Cripple Creek pit and are in the planning stage to develop access to future reclamation projects. This includes reestablishing previously constructed but now abandoned mining roads. Construction of a crossing across Coal Creek will also be required and is currently in the planning phase.

(2020) On April 15th construction of the Cripple Creek bridge began. The project was completed on June 30th at a total cost of \$955,441.52. In late August, reclamation activities began on Phase I of the Cripple Creek Pit project. Phase I of the project is estimated to cost nearly \$5 million. The project is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2022.

(2019) In the fall of 2019 the AML Program completed the Vitro Pit Reclamation Project. This project addressed 2100 linear feet of dangerous highwall while also eliminating severe erosion issues in the Healy Creek area. The total cost of the project was \$5,079,208.64.

The remaining months of 2019 were spent developing designs for a small modular bridge to be installed over Cripple Creek to provide access to the Cripple Creek pit. AML staff also spent significant time designing reclamation plans for Phase I of the Cripple Creek pit.

(2018) On going reclamation activities on the Vitro Pit Project.

(2017) Hydraulic Pit Reclamation Project was completed in 2017. This project addressed 1600 feet of dangerous highwalls and erosion issues in the Healy Creek area. In June of 2017 the Vitro Pit reclamation project was started and is currently on-going.

(2016) Three mine openings associated with the Inspiration Mine were closed in September of 2016.

(2016) The AML Program funded an archaeological survey of the Hudson Mill. Demolition is planned for 2019.

(2014) The AML Program demolished the old Healy Creek Washplant and completed backfilling 3 shafts on Ester Dome known as the Equinox Trail Shafts.

(2012 and 2013) The AML Program constructed two bridges in the Healy Valley area which provide access to previously mined and abandoned areas. These bridges will support at least a decade's worth of reclamation work with future funding that the program expects to receive.

(2011) The AML Program completed reclamation of 20 acres of smoldering coal fines near Sutton by capping the area with a two-foot layer of clay followed by a one-foot layer of gravel. The project also improved two miles of an existing mining road which will provide better access to State land for recreational users.

(2010) The AML Program completed cleanup of five acres of land known as the historic Vitro Camp in the Healy Valley. This work consisted of removing derelict equipment and disposing of asbestos.

(2010) The AML Program placed gravel along on the north and west side of Slipper Lake to improve access to camping areas.

(2009) The AML Program closed two shafts in the Sutton area and placed jersey barriers at the edge of an old highwall to block access to an old strip pit.

(2009) The AML Program completed road improvements to a ¼ mile of the Jonesville road near Sutton, established a fire truck turnaround near the fire hydrant at Slipper Lake, and placed gravel on 10 acres near Slipper Lake to improve camping areas and the boat launch.

**Line Item Detail**

<b>Line Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1000 Personal Services	\$500,000
2000 Travel	\$35,000
3000 Services	\$2,654,000
4000 Commodities	\$11,000
5000 Capital Outlay	\$0
7000 Grants	\$0
<b>Total Request</b>	<b>\$3,200,000</b>