



***Commonwealth of Virginia***  
***Office of Governor Ralph S. Northam***

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**Office of the Governor**

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**Governor Northam Announces Project  
Application Period Now Open for Abandoned  
Mine Land Pilot Program**

*~ Grants totaling \$10 million will support projects that help grow and diversify the regional economy and reclaim abandoned coal mine sites ~*

**RICHMOND**—Governor Ralph Northam today announced that project applications are now being accepted for the third round of funding through the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Pilot Program, which is administered by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME). The \$10 million in economic development grants is available for projects that are designed to boost the economy through strategies that include job creation, infrastructure improvements, broadband access, agriculture, and an increase in tourism, while also improving the environment through the reclamation of historic mining features.

“The Abandoned Mine Land Pilot Program is already proving to be a valuable economic development tool with several projects underway with grants from 2017 and 2018,” **said**

**Governor Northam.** “We have been able to help establish a major solar development and fund opportunities that help diversify the economy, increase tourism, and enhance the quality of life in Southwest Virginia. This new round of federal funding will continue to assist the Commonwealth’s coalfield region in redeveloping and repurposing old mine lands for new use, while also protecting and conserving our environment.”

Proposals must meet the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement (OSMRE) Guidance for Power Plus Pilot Program projects and be submitted to DMME’s Public Relations Manager, [Tarah Kesterson](#) by October 31, 2019. The necessary forms and guidance documents can be found on the DMME [website](#). Anyone may submit a proposal as long as it meets OSMRE guidance requirements.

“Working to secure this funding for our communities has been a priority of mine,” **said Congressman Morgan Griffith.** “Building on the past two years, this additional \$10 million will be used to reclaim abandoned mine lands while spurring economic development. I look forward to the third round of projects.”

Virginia is one of six states selected to administer this pilot program for economic development projects that develop AML sites. The grant comes from the Power Plus Pilot Program, which was part of the federal Omnibus Funding Bill.

“This program offers a wide range of development opportunities in Virginia’s coalfield region,” **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball.** “We have already approved some great projects that have spurred new industry and tourism in southwest Virginia. We look forward to the announcement of more projects with such an impact in 2019.”

DMME received the initial \$10 million in 2017 and worked with an advisory council to select five economic development projects. The council chose ten projects for the 2018 funding. Those looking for places to propose projects can find an [AML inventory](#) on the DMME website that lists locations and features for each site. An advisory group made up of local economic development leaders will review all proposals. The group will also choose projects to submit to OSMRE for review before announcing grant recipients.

“Our agency is glad to oversee this important part of economic development,” **said DMME Director John Warren.** “These projects serve as a great example of successful post mine land use. There are thousands of acres where an historic coal mine once operated or where coal is currently mined that hold potential for development with a positive environmental impact.”

The Abandoned Mine Land program was created by the Surface Mining and Control Act in 1977. The program is charged with reclaiming sites that were mined prior to 1977, prioritized based on environmental and safety severity. The traditional AML program uses funds from a coal tax to complete the priority work.

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