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Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy's Abandoned Mine Land Program to receive \$5.6 Million for 2019

Big Stone Gap, Va.- The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy's (DMME) Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program will receive \$5.6 million in 2019 to reclaim abandoned mine lands across the Commonwealth.

"We are so excited to receive more than we anticipated. We have several projects identified and just waiting to be funded," said Abandoned Mine Land Projects Coordinator, Lesa Baker. "There are thousands of abandoned mine land features across Virginia and this money will be prioritized to ensure the safety of our neighbors that live near these sites and to protect the environment."

The AML program was created after more thorough environmental laws were passed through the Surface Mining and Control Act in 1977. The program prioritizes sites based on human health and safety and is charged with reclaiming these sites. It is funded by reclamation fees paid by the coal industry based on the tons of coal mined.

An AML inventory is currently available via the DMME [website](#) and lists features for each site. A portion of the funds will also be set aside for emergency projects. Over the last ten years, DMME has completed \$64.4 million in projects across areas of Virginia where coal was historically mined. The construction is contracted with local companies and has creates an average of 90 jobs annually.

Over the last two years, the Abandoned Mine Land program also received a total of \$20 million for economic development projects that reclaim historic mining features in southwest Virginia called the Pilot Program. This money was through a federal grant from the U.S. Treasury.

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