



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
www.dnr.illinois.gov

JB Pritzker, Governor
Colleen Callahan, Director

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Contact

Jayette.bolinski@illinois.gov

Governor Pritzker announces \$75 million in federal funding for abandoned mine cleanup

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois will receive more than \$75 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Interior this year to boost efforts to clean up abandoned coal mines throughout the state, Governor JB Pritzker announced today.

The funding from the U.S. Department of the Interior is part of President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, designed to create good-paying union jobs and catalyze economic opportunity by reclaiming abandoned mine lands.

“This new federal funding will help clean up abandoned mines across our state, creating jobs and keeping our communities safe,” **Governor Pritzker said.** “I am grateful to President Biden, Secretary Haaland, and bipartisan members of Congress for their work to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and invest critical funds in our communities that need it most.”

The federal money will be directed to projects where environmental hazards associated with abandoned mines have been detected, including issues such as acid mine drainage, clogged streams, and pollution. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources’ Abandoned Mine Lands Program oversees mine reclamation in the state.

Currently, Illinois has 590 unfunded mine reclamation projects in its inventory with an estimated cost of at least \$156 million.

Illinois has a long, rich history of mining, and long-forgotten and -abandoned mines have been inventoried throughout the state, usually on private property. To be considered abandoned, a former mine property has no responsible party and the last mining activity took place prior to 1978.

“Everyone knows about Illinois’ history as a mining colossus, but fewer people are aware of what happens on the back end after these once-bustling industrial sites shut down,” said Colleen Callahan, director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. “This money is a welcome boost for the department because Illinois has a large amount of abandoned mine acreage and problem areas that need to be addressed so that we can protect our land and water.”

To date, the state's Abandoned Mine Lands Program has completed more than 2,300 projects, addressed more than 670 mine sites, and reclaimed nearly 9,400 acres of land in Illinois for a cost of \$231 million. In addition, more than 1,200 mine openings have been sealed, 907 hazardous tipple structures removed, nearly 6,000 acres of gob and slurry and 1,900 acres of spoil stabilized, and 1,400 acres of affected land and water restored.

The President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law allocates a total of \$11.3 billion in AML funding to states over 15 years, which will help communities eliminate dangerous environmental conditions and pollution caused by past coal mining. This historic funding allocation is expected to address the vast majority of inventoried abandoned mine lands in this country.

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