Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (1977) Encyclopedia Article

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Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (1977)

This act set minimum federal standards for surface **coal** mining and **reclamation** of mining sites. The act requires that: (1) mine operators demonstrate reclamation capability; (2) previous uses must be restored and the land reshaped to its original contour, with **topsoil** replacement and replanting; (3) mining be prohibited on prime western agricultural land, with farmers and ranchers holding veto power; (4) the hydrologic **environment** must be protected, especially from **acid drainage**; and (5) a $4.1 billion fund be established to reclaim abandoned strip mines. States have enforcement responsibility, but the **U.S. Department of the Interior** steps in if they fail to act.