



Navajo AML Reclamation / UMTRA Department  
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**Restoring Navajo Lands to Enhance Beauty, Harmony and Quality of Life**

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***Navajo Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department  
to be impacted by Obama's proposed FY 2012 budget***

The Navajo Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Department is extremely disappointed with President Obama Administration's continued plan to cut AML funds for certified Tribes and States as mentioned in the Federal Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Proposal. The proposed budget will also include other major changes to the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) of 1977 to allow more funding for Eastern States with coal problems. Navajo AML is a Certified Program with completion of reclamation of abandoned coal problems. The problems on the Navajo Nation are not just abandoned coal mines; it includes abandoned uranium mines. This is the third year the Obama Administration will try to eliminate certified AML Programs.

***The Navajo AML department would like to continue seeking executive and legislative support from the Navajo Tribal Government to aid in our efforts to secure the AML Funding.***

Significant changes were made in the 2006 SMCRA Amendments, where a portion of the funds is allocated to the certified Tribes and States. Navajo AML funds are used for community infrastructure projects, and the needs are substantial towards funding such important projects, thus provides employment opportunities on the Navajo Nation. Navajo AML is also addressing the legacy of coal and uranium mining impacts to our lands.

The Navajo Nation benefits tremendously from these funds that prove immeasurable in terms of improving environmental safeguards and our people's quality of life. Pursuant to the 2006 SMCRA Amendments, Navajo AML is mandated to receive payments from fees collected from the current and past coal productions on the Navajo Nation. If Congress is to approve the Obama's legislative proposal, **Navajo Nation resources** would be allocated to States with high priority coal problems.

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The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) is tasked to improve communication with all Indian Tribes on policy and major issues impacting them. This is an executive directive based on "President Obama's November 5, 2009, Executive Memorandum on Federal Consultation with Indian Tribes." The lack of proper consultation between President Obama, DOI, OSM and the Navajo Nation resulted in no discussions between all parties to address all issues related to SMCRA and Budget issues. It is important to note the FY 2012 budget will also impact two other Certified Tribes, which are the Crow and Hopi.

Back in late 1940s and 1950s, the federal government came to the Navajo Nation for its mineral resources, primarily uranium for Cold War efforts. Private companies mined the areas that left damages to the land, ill-spread with mine openings and mine waste problems. Since 1988, Navajo AML has been managing projects, abiding by the provisions set forth under SMCRA of 1977, 1991 and 2006 amendments. Navajo AML has its obligation to reclaim AML problems and fund Public Facility Projects (PFP) through partnership efforts. Once more, jobs are created with AML funded projects, which keep earned income in Navajo communities while protecting the public health and safety towards environment impacts.

The Navajo communities have been environmentally and emotionally scarred from the Uranium Legacy, wherein numerous families have lost family members relating to uranium mining. AML funds have been vital in reclaiming over 50% of the abandoned uranium mines. SMCRA cannot be amended to legislate out the "Certified" Tribes and States AML funds. A percentage of AML fees set aside for Navajo AML are transferred to the United States Treasury to be considered part of the overall general funding, which is now being utilized to manipulate the Federal Budget problems. These AML Funds have a major impact on the livelihood and environment of the Navajo Nation. Elected officials within our Federal Government need to be reminded of our issues relating to the long-term security of AML Funds collected from our valuable Navajo Nation resources. SMCRA projects do improve the Quality of Life for Navajo people.

For more information on the Navajo AML Funding issue, please contact Madeline Roanhorse, Navajo AMLR Department Manager, at (928) 871 -6982.

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