

conducive to the conservation and best utilization of the natural resources of Maryland. The Committee shall review all mining and reclamation plans and progress reports. It also shall set the amount of any revegetation bond. The Committee may inspect or have inspected any open-pit mining operation at any time in order to determine land reclamation, conservation, and revegetation conditions. It shall establish plans and methods of procedure as well as practical guidelines for prompt and adequate reclamation, conservation, and revegetation of all lands disturbed by open-pit mining of bituminous coal within the State. These plans, methods of procedure, and practical guidelines shall be submitted to the Bureau. Finally, the Committee shall review the strip mining laws of the State to assure compliance with the spirit of the subtitle dealing with strip mining.]

(B) (1) THE COMMITTEE MAY:

(I) STUDY AND RECOMMEND SURFACE COAL MINE RECLAMATION POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND STANDARDS;

(II) FROM TIME TO TIME, REVIEW THE SURFACE COAL MINING LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECOMMENDING CHANGES TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM;

(III) REVIEW PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SURFACE COAL MINING LAWS AND REGULATIONS TO PROVIDE COMMENTS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE DEPARTMENT;

(IV) REVIEW THE DEPARTMENT'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE SURFACE COAL MINING REGULATORY PROGRAM AND THE ABANDONED COAL MINE RECLAMATION PROGRAM TO DETERMINE COMPLIANCE WITH THE PURPOSE OF THE SUBTITLES;

(V) ENTER ON ANY SURFACE COAL MINING OPERATION TO DETERMINE MINING AND RECLAMATION CONDITIONS; AND

(VI) RECOMMEND RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION, AND COST-SHARING PROJECTS TO PROMOTE OPTIMUM REVEGETATION OF SURFACE COAL MINED LANDS.

(2) THE COMMITTEE SHALL:

(I) DETERMINE THAT REVEGETATION OF RECLAIMED SURFACE COAL MINED LAND MEETS THE REVEGETATION STANDARDS OF THE REGULATORY PROGRAM BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT MAY RELEASE BOND HELD TO ASSURE REVEGETATION OF THE LAND; AND

(II) REVIEW APPROVE, REJECT, OR MODIFY RECLAMATION PLANS FOR SURFACE COAL MINE PERMIT APPLICATIONS AND PROVIDE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT.