

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8614

To authorize the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to carry out a study to examine the potential relationship between increased health risks and living in proximity to sites that have been or are being mined for surface coal deposits, and the potential human health effects of surface coal mining operations in Central Appalachia, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 4, 2024

Mr. MCGARVEY (for himself and Mr. GRIJALVA) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To authorize the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to carry out a study to examine the potential relationship between increased health risks and living in proximity to sites that have been or are being mined for surface coal deposits, and the potential human health effects of surface coal mining operations in Central Appalachia, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. STUDY ON POTENTIAL RELATIONSHIP BE-**
2 **TWEEN INCREASED HEALTH RISKS AND LIV-**
3 **ING IN PROXIMITY TO COAL MINES.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Deputy Director of the Office
5 of Surface Mining Reclamation Enforcement of the De-
6 partment of the Interior shall enter into an agreement
7 with the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and
8 Medicine to carry out, in accordance with subsection (c),
9 a study to examine the potential relationship between in-
10 creased health risks and living in proximity to sites that
11 have been or are being mined for surface coal deposits,
12 and the potential human health effects of surface coal
13 mining operations in Central Appalachia, including the ef-
14 fects of unreclaimed, idle, and abandoned coal mines.

15 (b) ELEMENTS.—The study under subsection (a)
16 shall include the following:

17 (1) An identification and description of the
18 main types of coal deposits in Central Appalachia
19 that are extracted using surface mining techniques,
20 including geologic and geochemical characteristics,
21 mining and reclamation operations, and waste man-
22 agement approaches.

23 (2) A summary of Federal and State regulatory
24 frameworks for surface coal mining operations, in-
25 cluding coal preparation plants and the associated

1 coarse coal refuse facilities and slurry impound-
2 ments.

3 (3) A discussion of relevant scientific research
4 on the potential human health effects related to sur-
5 face coal mining operations, including the following:

6 (A) An identification of effects from sur-
7 face coal mining operations on air, surface
8 water, groundwater, and drinking water quality
9 that could potentially lead to human health con-
10 cerns.

11 (B) An evaluation of the potential for
12 short-term and long-term human health effects,
13 including consideration of potential exposure
14 pathways and relevant environmental contami-
15 nants, noise and vibrations from operations,
16 and other stressors and quality of life concerns.

17 (C) An assessment of the scientific and
18 methodologic quality, rigor, and sufficiency of
19 such scientific research.

20 (4) An identification of baseline data and ap-
21 proaches necessary to monitor environmental and
22 human health indicators that may be affected by
23 surface coal mining operations.

24 (5) An identification of gaps in research and
25 needs for additional research that may assist in the

1 development of new approaches to safeguard the
2 health of residents living near surface coal mining
3 operations.

4 (6) Recommendations for—

5 (A) additional research needed to under-
6 stand the impact of surface coal mine oper-
7 ations on human health; and

8 (B) development of new approaches to
9 safeguard the health of residents living near
10 surface coal mining operations.

11 (7) An identification of the effects of
12 unreclaimed, idle, and abandoned coal mines.

13 (8) Recommendations to remedy any negative
14 health effects found from the study.

15 (c) COMMITTEE.—The National Academies of
16 Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine shall establish a com-
17 mittee to carry out the study under subsection (a). Mem-
18 bers of such committee shall have relevant expertise from
19 academia, State government agencies, industry, and non-
20 governmental organizations, and shall have individual ex-
21 pertise in technical areas such as mining engineering (in-
22 cluding coal mining operations), exposure science, moni-
23 toring and control of environmental and human exposure
24 to products from surface coal mine operations, epidemi-
25 ology, public health, environmental medicine, statistics,

1 regulatory decision making for surface mining, and control
2 and reclamation operations.

3 (d) INPUT.—In carrying out the study under sub-
4 section (a), the National Academies of Sciences, Engineer-
5 ing, and Medicine shall solicit input from impacted mem-
6 bers of the general public.

7 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 24 months after the
8 date of enactment of this Act, the National Academies of
9 Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine shall issue a report
10 containing the findings of the study under subsection (a),
11 including any recommendations on remediations of poten-
12 tial human health effects of surface coal mining operations
13 in Central Appalachia, including the effects of
14 unreclaimed, idle, and abandoned coal mines.

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