

No. 193

AN ACT

HB 2117

Amending the act of January 19, 1968 (P.L.996), entitled "An act authorizing the creation of indebtedness of five hundred million dollars for the conservation and reclamation of land and water resources; defining the powers and duties of certain offices, agencies and political subdivisions; providing for the allotment of proceeds hereunder including Commonwealth grants; prescribing standards and making appropriations," decreasing the amount of money available for the prevention, control and elimination of air pollution from abandoned burning coal refuse banks, and increasing the amount of money available for the prevention of surface subsidence above abandoned mine operations and for the control and extinguishment of surface and underground fires from abandoned mines.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Clause (1) of subsection (a) of section 16, act of January 19, 1968 (P.L.996), known as "The Land and Water Conservation and Reclamation Act," amended March 5, 1970 (P.L.142), is amended to read:

Section 16. Allotment of Moneys.—(a) The moneys received by the Commonwealth from the issuance and sale of bonds and notes pursuant to this act when appropriated by the General Assembly from the development fund shall be allotted for the following specific purposes:

(1) To the Department of **[Mines and Mineral Industries]** *Environmental Resources* the sum of two hundred million dollars (\$200,000,000) for the elimination of land and water scars created by past coal mining practices, one hundred fifty million dollars (\$150,000,000) of which shall be used for the prevention, control and elimination of stream pollution from mine drainage and may include the restoration of abandoned strip mine areas, **[twenty-five million dollars (\$25,000,000)]** *twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000)* of which shall be used for the prevention, control and elimination of air pollution from abandoned burning coal refuse banks provided such land and bank material is publicly owned, and **[twenty-five million dollars (\$25,000,000)]** *thirty million dollars (\$30,000,000)* of which shall be used for the prevention of surface subsidence above abandoned mine operations, for the control and extinguishment of surface and underground fires from abandoned mines and for administration expenses attendant thereto.

Pending the acquisition by the Commonwealth, a county or a municipality, when necessary, of any land or other property interest required to combat stream pollution, air pollution, subsidence or mine fires, whenever the Secretary of **[Mines and Mineral Industries]** *Environmental Resources* makes a finding of fact that: (i) a mine fire, refuse bank fire, stream pollution resulting from an abandoned strip mine area, or subsidence resulting from mining is at a stage where in the public

interest immediate action should be taken; and (ii) in the cases of mine fires, refuse bank fires or subsidence, an emergency exists and no other person or agency will act to combat the condition; and (iii) the owners of the property upon which entry must be made to combat the mine fire, refuse bank fire, stream pollution resulting from an abandoned strip mine area, or subsidence resulting from mining are not known, are not readily available or will not give permission for the Secretary of **[Mines and Mineral Industries] *Environmental Resources***, political subdivisions of the Commonwealth or municipalities, their agents, employes or contractors to enter upon such premises, or the delay entailed in reaching said owners and in securing from them the right to enter upon the premises in the case of mine fires, refuse bank fires and subsidence constitutes a clear and immediate danger to the life or property of others.

Then, upon giving notice to the owners if known or by posting notice upon the premises and advertising once in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality in which the land lies, and filing with the prothonotary of the court of common pleas of the county in which said premises lie of such intention of entry or taking, in conformity with the provisions of the "Eminent Domain Code," the Secretary of **[Mines and Mineral Industries] *Environmental Resources***, political subdivisions of the Commonwealth or municipalities, their agents, employes or contractors, shall have the right to enter upon the premises to combat the mine fire, refuse bank fire, stream pollution resulting from an abandoned strip mine area, or subsidence resulting from mining and to do all necessary or expedient to do so. The moneys expended for such work and the benefits accruing to any such premises so entered upon shall immediately become a charge against such land and shall mitigate or offset any claim in or any action brought by any owner of any interest in such premises for any alleged damages by virtue of such entry. Within six months after the completion of any of the work herein contemplated on any property, the Secretary of **[Mines and Mineral Industries] *Environmental Resources*** shall itemize the moneys so expended and shall file a statement thereof in the office of the prothonotary of the county in which the land lies. Such statement shall constitute a lien upon the said land as of the date of the expenditure of the moneys and shall have priority as a lien second only to the lien of real estate taxes imposed upon said land. The lien shall not exceed an amount determined by a board of viewers, appointed as provided in the "Eminent Domain Code," to be the market value of the land immediately after the Department of **[Mines and Mineral Industries] *Environmental Resources*** has completed its work, and the lien shall extend only to that portion of the premises directly involved in the work of the Department of **[Mines and Mineral Industries] *Environmental Resources*** under this act.

(I) The Department of **[Mines and Mineral Industries] *Environmental Resources*** shall have the power and authority, if not granted it otherwise,

to engage in the work aforesaid and to do all things necessary and expedient to effect such programs.

(II) The Department of **[Mines and Mineral Industries]** *Environmental Resources* shall have the power and authority to construct and operate a plant or plants for the control and treatment of water pollution resulting from mine drainage. The extent of this control and treatment may be dependent upon the ultimate use of the water: Provided, That the above provisions of this paragraph shall not be deemed in any way to repeal or supersede any portion of the act of June 22, 1937 (P.L.1987), as amended, known as "The Clean Streams Law," and no control or treatment hereunder shall be in any way less than that required under the act of June 22, 1937 (P.L.1987), as amended, known as "The Clean Streams Law." The construction of a plant or plants may include major interceptors and other facilities appurtenant to the plant. In the operation of such plant or plants the Department of **[Mines and Mineral Industries]** *Environmental Resources* shall have the power to permit coal mine operators or owners to discharge their mine drainage to such plant or plants and the Secretary of **[Mines and Mineral Industries]** *Environmental Resources* shall have the authority to charge coal mine operators or owners for the treatment of such mine drainage. The charge to the coal mine operators or owners for the treatment of such mine drainage shall be based upon their proportional share of the capital and operating cost and the quantity and quality of the pollutant. Further, the Secretary of **[Mines and Mineral Industries]** *Environmental Resources* shall have the authority to sell any by-product or products resulting from the operation of such plants. Any such moneys so received shall be placed in the General Fund and are hereby appropriated to the Department of **[Mines and Mineral Industries]** *Environmental Resources*.

(III) The Secretary of **[Mines and Mineral Industries]** *Environmental Resources* shall have the power and authority to establish rules and regulations and establish rates to implement the foregoing paragraph. Such rules and regulations may provide for the escrowing of payments made prior to the construction or operation of the plant or plants.

\* \* \*

Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

APPROVED—The 12th day of July, A. D. 1972.

MILTON J. SHAPP

The foregoing is a true and correct copy of Act of the General Assembly  
No. 193.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C. McLaughlin Tucker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a prominent "T".

*Secretary of the Commonwealth.*