

## Chapter 517 — Mining and Mining Claims

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### MINING AND MINING CLAIMS

#### MINERAL RESOURCES

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

517.005 Legislative findings

#### MINING CLAIMS

##### (Veins or Lodes)

517.010 Location of mining claims upon veins or lodes

517.030 Recording copy of location notice; fee

517.040 Abandoned claims

##### (Placer Deposits)

517.042 “Legal subdivision” defined for ORS 517.042 to 517.052

517.044 Location of claims upon placer deposits; posting notice

517.046 Marking boundaries of claim or locating by legal subdivisions

517.052 Recording copy of location notice; fee

##### (General Provisions)

517.060 Correcting defective notice of location

517.065 Effect of noncompliance with law in locating claim

517.070 Certain locations subject to prior rights

517.080 Mining claims as realty

517.090 Application to claims of law governing transfers and mortgages of realty

517.100 Sums payable on redemption of claim; interest

517.110 Grubstaking contracts

#### PROSPECTING, SMALL SCALE MINING AND RECREATIONAL MINING

517.120 Definitions for ORS 517.120 to 517.133

517.123 Legislative findings

517.125 Rules to be adopted in consultation with affected parties

517.128 Restricting access to open mining area or mining claim prohibited

517.130 Mineral trespass

517.133 Interfering with a mining operation

517.135 Exemption from crimes of mineral trespass and interfering with a mining operation

#### MINING USING MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT IN BEDS AND BANKS OF RIVERS

517.140 Legislative findings; mining using motorized equipment in beds and banks of rivers

#### MILLSITES

517.160 Location of nonmineral land as millsite; notice; fee

#### EXTINGUISHING DORMANT MINERAL INTEREST

517.170 Policy

517.180 Procedure for extinguishing dormant mineral interest

#### ASSESSMENT WORK

517.210 Recording affidavit of annual compliance

517.220 Affidavit or lack thereof as evidence; recording fee

517.230 Performance of assessment work by co-owners

517.240 Failure of co-owner to contribute; notice

517.250 Form of notice; service; publication

517.260 Notice; return and proof of service

517.270 Vesting of interest of delinquent co-owner

517.280 Certificate of ownership; issuance

517.290 Fee for certificate

517.300 Effect of certificate; certified copy of certificate, notice and return admissible as evidence

517.310 Recording and indexing certificate; fee; effect

517.320 Counteraffidavits of delinquent owner; suit to quiet title; judgment

517.330 Accounting for fees

#### MINING LEASES

517.430 Use of timber by lessee

517.440 Lessee, licensee, or operator of mine deemed bailee of yield until payment of lessor and workers

#### MINERAL EXPLORATION

517.702 Legislative findings

517.705 Exploration permit; application; information required; confidentiality of production records, mineral assessments or trade secrets

517.710 Fees

517.715 Exemptions from permit requirement

517.720 Persons with operating permit exempted

517.725 Department inspection of exploration site

517.730 Drill hole or well abandonment; rules

517.735 Exploration on land administered by Department of State Lands

517.740 Rules

#### RECLAMATION OF MINING LANDS

(Generally)

517.750 Definitions for ORS 517.702 to 517.989

517.753 Exclusion certificate required for certain small-scale surface mining operations; application; fees

517.755 Mining operations affecting more than five acres

517.760 Policy

517.770 Exemptions from reclamation requirements

517.775 Permit fee for certain landowners and operators; erosion stabilization at mining operations exempt from reclamation

517.780 Effect on county zoning laws or ordinances; rules; certain operations exempt

517.790 Operating permit required for surface mining on certain lands; application for permit; proposed reclamation plans; waiver of requirement for preparation and approval of reclamation plan; refusal to issue operating permit; provisional operating permit

517.795 Department to consult with and cooperate with other agencies

517.797 Memorandum of agreement with Department of State Lands regarding permitting

517.800 Fees; rules; annual report

- 517.810 Requirement for bond or security; rules; other security in lieu of bond
  - 517.813 Reclamation Guarantee Fund
  - 517.815 Reclamation bond pooling program; requirements; rules
  - 517.820 Extensions of time for submission of proposed reclamation plans; time limit for reclamation completion; consultation with cooperating agencies
  - 517.825 Mining aggregate on high-value farmland; requirements; rules
  - 517.830 Operating permit approval process; appeal from denial of plan; consolidated application process
  - 517.831 Modification of operating permit or reclamation plan; opportunity for alternative dispute resolution
  - 517.832 Emergency operating permit; rules
  - 517.833 Transfer of operating permit; rules
  - 517.834 Temporary operating permit; rules
  - 517.835 Conditions on operating permit or reclamation plan to prevent impact on ground water
  - 517.836 Surveying or marking surface mining operations; rules
  - 517.837 Annual report by permittee; rules
  - 517.840 Administration and enforcement of ORS 517.702 to 517.989; rules
  - 517.850 Inspection of permit area
  - 517.855 Disruption of portion of mining property preserved from mining
  - 517.860 Effect of failure to comply with operating permit or reclamation plan; department may perform work and assess costs against bond or security
  - 517.862 Revocation, termination or refusal to renew operating permit
  - 517.865 Effect of failure to perform reclamation and insufficient bond; lien; notice; priority; foreclosure
  - 517.870 Adjustment of bond or security of operator upon satisfactory completion of reclamation work
  - 517.880 Order for suspension of surface mining operation operating without required permit; enjoining operation upon failure of operator to comply; completion of reclamation by department
  - 517.890 Review of final determination
  - 517.901 Confidentiality of production records, mineral assessments and trade secrets
- (Nonaggregate Mineral Surface Mines)
- 517.905 Applicability of ORS 517.910 to 517.989 and 517.910 to 517.951

- 517.910 Definitions for ORS 517.910 to 517.989
- 517.915 Additional operating permit requirements for nonaggregate mineral mines; denial of permit if reclamation not possible
- 517.917 Activation of project coordinating committee
- 517.920 Permit application fees under ORS 517.910 to 517.989
- 517.925 Time limit for action on permit application
- 517.930 Department inspection
- 517.951 Legislative intent not to assume exclusive jurisdiction

#### MINING OPERATIONS SUBJECT TO CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION PROCESS

- 517.952 Definitions for ORS 517.952 to 517.989
- 517.953 Policy
- 517.954 Application of ORS 517.952 to 517.989
- 517.956 Requirements for mining operations; rules
- 517.957 Department coordination of activities of affected agencies
- 517.958 Compliance with preapplication process; purpose
- 517.959 Public notice requirements for ORS 517.952 to 517.989; master list of interested parties; fees
- 517.961 Notice of intent to submit application; posting of notice
- 517.963 Department duties upon receipt of notice of intent
- 517.965 Project coordinating committee
- 517.967 Technical review team
- 517.969 Collection of baseline data; public informational meetings; collection methodology
- 517.971 Consolidated application
- 517.973 Fees; payment of expenses of department and permitting and cooperating agencies
- 517.975 Distribution of completed consolidated application; notice of receipt of application
- 517.977 Preparation of draft permits; public hearing; determination of completeness of consolidated application
- 517.978 Review of application; additional information
- 517.979 Environmental evaluation; review of baseline data; payment of costs of third party contractor

- 517.980 Socioeconomic impact analysis
- 517.981 Draft permit and permit conditions; denial of permit; time limits; public hearing on draft permit
- 517.982 Final permits; permit conditions submitted by cooperating agencies
- 517.983 Consolidated contested case hearing; judicial review; stay of permit
- 517.984 Modification of permit; project coordinating committee
- 517.985 Rulemaking
- 517.986 Time limit for final action on permit subject to consolidated application process
- 517.987 Reclamation bond or security; annual assessment of cost of reclamation; lien; release of security; post-reclamation security
- 517.988 Permit conditions by State Department of Fish and Wildlife; violations of State Department of Fish and Wildlife conditions
- 517.989 Rules applicable to consolidated application

#### PENALTIES

- 517.990 Criminal penalties
- 517.992 Civil penalties; rules

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

**517.005 Legislative findings.** The Legislative Assembly finds and declares that:

(1) Mining contributes to the economy and well-being of the people of Oregon. Mining creates high-paying jobs in parts of this state that, due to a lack of infrastructure and development, are less likely to be capable of diversifying beyond a regional economy based on natural resources. Mining creates secondary industries in the surrounding region and attracts numerous providers of goods and services. Mining also generates significant tax revenues for local governments and provides support for civic and educational projects in local communities.

(2) The mining of minerals is a natural resource use.

(3) In eastern Oregon, including Lake, Harney, Malheur, Baker and Grant Counties, diversifying the types of natural resource uses that contribute to local economies enables those economies to better withstand temporary economic declines that affect specific natural resource uses. In the same way that a diversified economy is good for a large metropolitan area, a diversified natural resource economy is good for eastern Oregon.

(4) Technological advances in the mining industry, coupled with reclamation efforts, have greatly reduced the environmental impacts of mining operations. The size and scope of modern operations is such that the operations do not cause interference with other natural resource uses, particularly in an area as vast as eastern Oregon.

(5) Mining operations should be encouraged and supported in eastern Oregon as a means for residents and communities to improve their economies and well-being. [2015 c.826 §1]

**Note:** 517.005 was enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but was not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 517 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

#### MINING CLAIMS

(Veins or Lodes)

**517.010 Location of mining claims upon veins or lodes.** (1) Any person, a citizen of the United States, or one who has declared an intention to become such, who discovers a vein or lode of mineral-bearing rock in place upon the unappropriated public domain of the United States within this state, may locate a claim upon such vein or lode by posting thereon a notice of such discovery and location. The notice shall contain:

(a) The name of the lode or claim.

(b) The names of the locators.

(c) The date of the location.

(d) The number of linear feet claimed along the vein or lode each way from the point of discovery, with the width on each side of the lode or vein.

(e) The general course or strike of the vein or lode as nearly as may be, with reference to some natural object or permanent monument in the vicinity, and by defining the boundaries upon the surface of each claim so that the same may be readily traced.

(2)(a) Such boundaries shall be marked within 30 days after posting of such notice by four substantial posts, projecting not less than three feet above the surface of the ground, and made of wood measuring not less than one and one-half inch by one and one-half inch, or by substantial mounds of stone, or earth and stone, at least two feet in height, one such post or mound of rock at each corner of such claims.

(b) During the course of normal maintenance of the claim location posts or monuments, any post that requires replacement and is not constructed of naturally occurring materials shall be replaced by posts that are made of wood measuring not less than one and one-half inch by one and one-half inch on a side and that project not less than three feet above the surface of the ground.

(3) At such time as any lode mining claim is declared invalid by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management or is otherwise dropped by the last claim holder of record without transfer through lease or sale to another person, all claim location posts not made of natural materials shall be removed from the public domain of the United States and at the same time any post made of natural materials shall be removed or dismantled. [Amended by 1991 c.215 §1]

**517.020** [Repealed by 1971 c.228 §1]

**517.030 Recording copy of location notice; fee.** The locator shall, within 60 days from the posting of the location notices by the locator upon the lode or claim, record with the clerk of the county where the claim is situated, who shall be the custodian of mining records and miners' liens, a copy of the notice posted by the locator upon the lode or claim and shall pay the clerk a fee for such recording as provided in ORS 205.320, which sum the clerk shall immediately pay over to the treasurer of the county and shall take a receipt therefor, as in case of other county funds coming into the possession of such officer. The clerk shall immediately record the location notice. [Amended by 1971 c.228 §2; 1971 c.621 §33; 1973 c.598 §4; 1975 c.607 §36; 1979 c.833 §31; 1991 c.230 §25; 1999 c.654 §28]

**517.040 Abandoned claims.** Abandoned claims are unappropriated mineral lands, and titles thereto shall be obtained as specified in ORS 517.010 and 517.030, without reference to any work previously done thereon.

(Placer Deposits)

**517.042 "Legal subdivision" defined for ORS 517.042 to 517.052.** As used in ORS 517.042 to 517.052, unless the context requires otherwise, "legal subdivision" means a subdivision of a state survey or of a United States survey which has been extended over the geographic area to be described. [1961 c.525 §1]

**517.044 Location of claims upon placer deposits; posting notice.** Any individual, a citizen of the United States, or one who has declared an intention to become such, who discovers a placer deposit of minerals upon the unappropriated public domain of the United States within this state, which minerals are subject to location under the mineral and mining laws of the United States, may locate a placer claim thereon by posting in a conspicuous place thereon a notice of such discovery and location. The notice shall contain:

(1) The name of the claim.

(2) The name of the individual or individuals locating the claim.

(3) The date of the location of the claim.

(4) The number of feet or acres claimed, together with a description, either by legal subdivisions, if practicable, or if not, then by reference to some natural object or permanent monument in the vicinity of the claim, which will identify the claim located. [1961 c.525 §2]

**517.046 Marking boundaries of claim or locating by legal subdivisions.** (1) Unless the claim for placer deposit referred to in ORS 517.044 is located by legal subdivisions, the surface boundaries of the claim must be marked so that the same may be readily traced. Such boundaries shall be marked within 30 days after the posting of the notice described in ORS 517.044 by substantial posts or other monuments of the same size, materials and dimensions as in the case of quartz claims. The boundaries of the claim shall be marked at each corner or angle, and, when any side or end of the claim extends for more than 1,320 feet without a corner or angle, then at intervals of not less than 1,320 feet along such side or end.

(2) Where the claim for placer deposit referred to in ORS 517.044 is taken by legal subdivisions, no other reference in the notice of claim required to be posted and filed under the provisions of ORS 517.042 to 517.052 than to the legal subdivisions shall be required and the boundaries of a claim so located and described need not be staked or monumented. The description by legal subdivisions in the notice required to be filed under ORS 517.052 shall be deemed the equivalent of marking the surface boundaries of the claim. [1961 c.525 §3]

**517.048** [1961 c.525 §4; repealed by 1971 c.228 §1]

**517.050** [Renumbered as part of 517.065]

**517.052 Recording copy of location notice; fee.** The individual locating a placer deposit shall, within 60 days from the posting of the location notice upon the claim, record with the clerk of the county where the claim is situated, a copy of the notice posted by the individual upon the claim. The fee for recording such location notice shall be the fee provided for in ORS 205.320. The clerk shall immediately record the location notice. [1961 c.525 §5; 1971 c.228 §3; 1991 c.230 §26; 1999 c.654 §29]

(General Provisions)

**517.060 Correcting defective notice of location.** If at any time an individual who has located a mining claim within the meaning of ORS 517.010 or 517.044, or the assigns of the individual, apprehends that the original notice of location of the mining claim was defective, erroneous, or that the requirements of the law had not been complied with before the filing of the notice, such locator or assigns may post and record in the manner now provided by law, an amended notice of the location which shall relate back to the date of the original location. However, the posting and recording of the amended notice of location shall not interfere with the existing rights of others at the time of posting the amended notice. [Amended by 1961 c.525 §7; 1991 c.230 §27]

**517.065 Effect of noncompliance with law in locating claim.** (1) Subject to ORS 517.060, all locations or attempted locations of quartz mining claims subsequent to December 31, 1898, that do not comply with ORS 517.010 and 517.030 are void.

(2) Except as provided in ORS 517.060, all locations or attempted locations of placer mining claims made after August 9, 1961, that do not comply with the provisions of ORS 517.042 to 517.052 are void. [Subsection (1) formerly 517.050; subsection (2) enacted as 1961 c.525 §6]

**517.070 Certain locations subject to prior rights.** Any location of any mining claim made upon any natural stream, or contiguous or near to any placer mine, or upon or below the dump of any placer mine, shall be subject to the prior right of all mines in operation prior to the making of such location, to discharge debris, gravel, earth, and slickens which were or may be discharged at the time of making such subsequent location.

**517.080 Mining claims as realty.** All mining claims, whether quartz or placer, are real estate. The owner of the possessory right thereto has a legal estate therein within the meaning of ORS 105.005.



**517.090 Application to claims of law governing transfers and mortgages of realty.** All conveyances of mining claims or of interests therein, either quartz or placer, whether patented or unpatented, are subject to the provisions governing transfers and mortgages of other realty as to execution, recordation, foreclosure, execution sale and redemption. However, such redemption by the judgment debtor must take place within 60 days from date of confirmation, or such right is lost. [Amended by 2003 c.14 §339]

**517.100 Sums payable on redemption of claim; interest.** In case of redemption from sale under judgment, the redemptioner shall pay such sums as are now required by law for redemption under execution sale, and such additional sum as may have been expended upon the property so redeemed by the purchaser under execution, or the assigns of the purchaser, in order to keep alive the possessory right thereto after the execution sale, not exceeding \$100 for each claim, with 10 percent interest thereon from date of such expenditures. [Amended by 2003 c.576 §466]

**517.110 Grubstaking contracts.** All contracts of mining copartnership, commonly known as “grubstaking,” shall be in writing, and recorded with the clerk of the county wherein the locations thereunder are made. Unless contracts of mining copartnership contain the names of the parties thereto and the duration thereof, the contracts are void. [Amended by 1991 c.230 §28]

## PROSPECTING, SMALL SCALE MINING AND RECREATIONAL MINING

**517.120 Definitions for ORS 517.120 to 517.133.** As used in ORS 517.120 to 517.133:

(1) “Mining” means the removal of gold, silver or other precious minerals from aggregate or a vein of ore.

(2) “Mining claim” means a portion of the public lands claimed for the valuable minerals occurring in those lands and for which the mineral rights are obtained under federal law or a right that is recognized by the United States Bureau of Land Management and given an identification number.

(3) “Prospecting” means to search or explore, using motorized or nonmotorized methods, for samples of gold, silver or other precious minerals from among small quantities of aggregate or ore.

(4) “Recreational mining” means mining in a manner that is consistent with a hobby or casual use, including use on public lands set aside or withdrawn from mineral entry for the purpose of recreational mining, or using pans, sluices, rocker boxes, other nonmotorized equipment and dredges with motors of 16 horsepower or less and a suction nozzle of four inches or less in diameter.

(5) “Small scale mining” means mining on a valid federal mining claim operating under a notice of intent or plan of operations while using whatever equipment is necessary, as approved by the notice of intent or plan of operations, to locate, remove and improve the claim. [1999 c.354 §1]

**Note:** 517.120 to 517.135 were enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but were not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 517 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.123 Legislative findings.** The Legislative Assembly finds that prospecting, small scale mining and recreational mining:

(1) Are important parts of the heritage of the State of Oregon; and

(2) Provide economic benefits to the state and local communities. [1999 c.354 §2; 2013 c.783 §10]

**Note:** See note under 517.120.

**517.125 Rules to be adopted in consultation with affected parties.** Any rule pertaining to recreational or small scale mining adopted after June 28, 1999, shall be adopted in consultation with affected parties. [1999 c.354 §3]

**Note:** See note under 517.120.

**517.128 Restricting access to open mining area or mining claim prohibited.** A person may not attempt to restrict access to any open mining area or valid mining claim or to harass or interfere in any way with a person engaged in lawful mining activities. [1999 c.354 §4]

**Note:** See note under 517.120.

**517.130 Mineral trespass.** (1) As used in this section:

(a) “Bedrock sluice” means a wood or metal flume or trough that is permanently attached to the bedrock of the creek and is equipped with transverse riffles across the bottom of the unit and used to recover heavy mineral sands.

(b) “Deface” includes but is not limited to altering, pulling down, damaging or destroying.

(c) “Dredge” means a subsurface hose from 1.5 to 10 inches in diameter that is powered by an engine and is used to draw up auriferous material that is then separated in the sluice portion of the unit.

(d) “Flume” means a trough used to convey water.

(e) “Quartz mill” means a facility for processing ores or gravel.

(f) “Rocker box” means a unit constructed of a short trough attached to curved supports that allow the unit to be rocked from side to side.

(g) “Sluice box” means a portable unit constructed of a wood or metal flume or trough equipped with transverse riffles across the bottom of the unit and that is used to recover heavy mineral sands.

(2) A person commits the crime of mineral trespass if the person intentionally and without the permission of the claim holder:

(a) Enters a mining claim posted as required in ORS 517.010 or 517.044 and disturbs, removes or attempts to remove any mineral from the claim site;

(b) Tamper with or disturbs a flume, rocker box, bedrock sluice, sluice box, dredge, quartz mill or other mining equipment at a posted mining claim; or

(c) Defaces a location stake, side post, corner post, landmark, monument or posted written notice within a posted mining claim.

(3) Mineral trespass is a Class C misdemeanor. [1999 c.354 §5]

**Note:** See note under 517.120.

**517.133 Interfering with a mining operation.** (1) As used in this section, “lawful mining operation” means any small scale mining operation that is in full compliance with state and federal laws.

(2) A person commits the crime of interfering with a mining operation if the person intentionally:

(a) Interferes with a lawful mining operation; or

(b) Stops, or causes to be stopped, a lawful mining operation.

(3) Interfering with a mining operation is a Class C misdemeanor. [1999 c.354 §6]

**Note:** See note under 517.120.

**517.135 Exemption from crimes of mineral trespass and interfering with a mining operation.** (1) ORS 517.128 to 517.133 do not apply to conduct that would otherwise constitute an offense when it is required or authorized by law or judicial decree or is performed by a public servant in the reasonable exercise of official powers, duties or functions.

(2) As used in subsection (1) of this section, “laws or judicial decrees” includes but is not limited to:

(a) Laws defining duties and functions of public servants;

(b) Laws defining duties of private citizens to assist public servants in the performance of certain of their functions; and

(c) Judgments and orders of courts. [1999 c.354 §7]

**Note:** See note under 517.120.

## MINING USING MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT IN BEDS AND BANKS OF RIVERS

**517.140 Legislative findings; mining using motorized equipment in beds and banks of rivers.** The Legislative Assembly finds that:

(1) Prospecting, small scale mining and recreational mining are part of the unique heritage of the State of Oregon.

(2) Prospecting, small scale mining and recreational mining provide economic benefits to the State of Oregon and local communities and support tourism, small businesses and recreational opportunities, all of which are economic drivers in Oregon's rural communities.

(3) Exploration of potential mine sites is necessary to discover the minerals that underlie the surface and inherently involves natural resource disturbance.

(4) Mining that uses motorized equipment in the beds and banks of the rivers of Oregon can pose significant risks to Oregon's natural resources, including fish and other wildlife, riparian areas, water quality, the investments of this state in habitat enhancement and areas of cultural significance to Indian tribes.

(5) Between 2007 and 2013, mining that uses motorized equipment in the beds and banks of the rivers of Oregon increased significantly, raising concerns about the cumulative environmental impacts.

(6) The regulatory system related to mining that uses motorized equipment in the beds and banks of the rivers of Oregon should be efficient and structured to best protect environmental values. [2013 c.783 §1]

**Note:** 517.140 was enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but was not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 517 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

## MILLSITES

**517.160 Location of nonmineral land as millsite; notice; fee.** (1) The proprietor of a vein or lode, or placer claim, or the owner of a quartz mill or reduction works, may locate not more than five acres of nonmineral land as a millsite. Such locations shall be made in the same manner as provided in ORS 517.044 for locating placer claims, except that no discovery or location work is required. Where a millsite is appurtenant to a mining claim, either lode or placer, the notice of location of such millsite shall describe by appropriate reference the mining claim to which it is appurtenant.

(2) The locator of a millsite shall, within 30 days from the date of posting a notice thereon, record a copy thereof with the same county officer. The fee for recording such location notice shall be the fee provided for in ORS 205.320. Such location notices shall be recorded in the same manner as location notices of quartz or placer claims but need have no affidavit of location work attached. [1963 c.123 §1; 1999 c.654 §30]

## EXTINGUISHING DORMANT MINERAL INTEREST

**517.170 Policy.** It is in the interest of the State of Oregon to provide a mechanism for the removal of dormant encumbrances on property which prevent a landowner from using or developing that property in a manner which contributes to the economy and increases the state's tax base. [1983 c.421 §1]

**517.180 Procedure for extinguishing dormant mineral interest.** (1) An owner of land in which another person holds a mineral interest, may extinguish the holder's interest by publishing notice and submitting an affidavit of publication for recording as described in subsections (4) to (9) of this section, unless:

(a) Within the last 30 years, the holder of the mineral interest has submitted a statement of claim for recording in the manner set out in subsection (3) of this section; or

(b) The holder of the mineral interest acquired the mineral interest within the previous 30 years.

(2) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Mineral interest" includes any interest that is created by an instrument transferring, either by grant, assignment, reservation or otherwise, an interest of any kind in coal, oil, gas or other minerals and geothermal resources, except an interest vested in the United States, the State of Oregon or a political subdivision of the State of Oregon. A mineral interest does not include an interest in sand or gravel.

(b) "Owner of land" includes a vested fee simple owner or a contract purchaser.

(3) The statement of claim referred to in subsection (1) of this section shall be submitted for recording in the office of the clerk of the county in which the land affected by the mineral interest is located and shall contain:

(a) The name and address of the holder of the mineral interest as that name is shown in the instrument that created the original mineral interest; and

(b) The name and address of the current holder of the mineral interest.

(4) To extinguish the mineral interest held by another person, and acquire ownership of that interest, the owner of the land shall publish notice of the lapse of the mineral interest at least once each week for three consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the lands affected by the mineral interest are located. If the address of the mineral interest holder is known or can be determined by due diligence, the notice shall also be mailed by the owner of the land to the holder of the mineral interest before the first publication.

(5) The notice required in subsection (4) of this section shall include:

(a) The name of the holder of the mineral interest, as shown of record;

(b) A reference to the instrument creating the original mineral interest, including where it is recorded;

(c) A description of the lands affected by the mineral interest;

(d) The name and address of the person giving the notice;

(e) The date of first publication of the notice; and

(f) A statement that the holder of the mineral interest must submit a statement of claim to the county clerk within 60 days after the date of the last publication or the mineral interest of the holder may be extinguished.

(6) A copy of the notice and an affidavit of publication of the notice, as described in subsection (7) of this section, shall be submitted to the county clerk within 15 days after the date of the last publication of the notice in the office of the clerk of the county where the lands affected by the mineral interest are located.

(7) The affidavit of publication shall contain either:

(a) A statement that a copy of the notice was mailed to the holder of the mineral interest and the address to which it was mailed; or

(b) If no copy of the notice was mailed, a detailed description, including dates, of the efforts made to determine with due diligence the address of the holder of the mineral interest.

(8) If the owner of the land affected by the mineral interest gives notice as required in subsection (4) of this section and submits a copy of the notice and the affidavit of publication for recording as required by subsection (6) of this section, the mineral interest of the holder shall be extinguished and become the property of the owner of the lands, unless the holder of the mineral interest submits a statement of claim to the county clerk within 60 days after the date of the last publication of the notice.

(9) Upon receipt, the clerk of the county shall record a statement of claim or a notice and affidavit of publication of notice in the Mineral and Mining Record. When possible, the clerk shall also indicate by marginal notation on the instrument creating the original mineral interest the recording of the statement of claim or notice and affidavit of publication of notice. The clerk of the county shall record a statement of claim by cross-referencing in the Mineral and Mining Record the name of the current holder of the mineral interest and the name of the original holder of the mineral interest as set out in the statement of claim.

(10) The provisions of this section may not be waived at any time. [1983 c.421 §2; 1997 c.819 §10; 1999 c.654 §31]

## ASSESSMENT WORK

**517.210 Recording affidavit of annual compliance.** Within 30 days after the performance of labor or making of improvements, or making federal fee payments required by law to be annually performed or made upon any mining claim, the person in whose behalf such labor was performed or improvement or payment was made, or someone in behalf of the person, knowing the facts, shall make and have recorded in the Mineral and Mining Record of the county in which the mining claim is situated, an affidavit setting forth:

(1) The name of the claim or claims if grouped and a reference to the record where the location notice of each such claim is recorded.

(2) The number of days' work done and the character and value of the improvements placed thereon, together with their location.

(3) The dates of performing the labor and making the improvements.

(4) At whose instance or request the work was done or improvements made.

(5) The actual amount paid for the labor and improvements, and by whom paid, when the same was not done by the claim owner.

(6) That the federal fee requirements have been met by the owner or agent and that the owner or agent intends to hold the claim in good standing for the applicable assessment year. [Amended by 1993 c.443 §1; 1999 c.654 §32]

**517.220 Affidavit or lack thereof as evidence; recording fee.** The affidavit described in ORS 517.210, when so recorded, or a duly certified copy thereof, is prima facie evidence of the facts therein stated. Failure to file such affidavit within the prescribed time is prima facie evidence that such labor has not been done. The fee for recording the affidavit shall be the fee provided by ORS 205.320. [Amended by 1971 c.621 §34; 1975 c.607 §37; 1979 c.833 §32; 1991 c.230 §29; 1999 c.654 §33]

**517.230 Performance of assessment work by co-owners.** Whenever any quartz or placer mines are owned by one or more persons, or are owned in common by any persons, any person owning any legal or equitable interest in the mines may perform the annual assessment work upon them which is required by the laws of the United States and Oregon. Such work, when it complies with said laws, shall protect the mines from relocation.

**517.240 Failure of co-owner to contribute; notice.** Upon failure of any co-owner of any mine to contribute that co-owner's proportion of expenditures required in assessment work, or to perform or pay for such proportion, the co-owners who performed or caused to be performed the labor or assessment work, may, at the expiration of the year for which the assessment work was performed, give the delinquent co-owner notice that the assessment work for that year has been performed, stating by whom performed, the amount of work performed and the dates between which it was performed; together with a statement of the amount due from the delinquent co-owner for the delinquent co-owner's proportion of the work, and requiring the delinquent co-owner, within 90 days from the date of service of the notice, to pay to the co-owners who performed or caused to be performed such work, the delinquent co-owner's proportion. The notice shall further state that if the delinquent co-owner fails or refuses to contribute the proportion due for the work, the interest of the delinquent co-owner in the mine will become the property of the co-owners who performed or caused to be performed the assessment work.

**517.250 Form of notice; service; publication.** The notice shall be in writing and signed by the co-owner who performed or caused to be performed the assessment work. It shall be served upon the delinquent co-owner personally by the sheriff of the county in which the mine is situated, if the delinquent co-owner is within the county. If the delinquent co-owner can be found in any other county, then the notice shall be served by the sheriff of that county. If the delinquent co-owner cannot be found within the state, or if at the time of giving the notice the delinquent co-owner is without the state, service of the notice shall be made by publication thereof in the weekly newspaper published in the county nearest to where the mine is situated. If there are two or more papers published in the county at the same distance from the mine, the co-owner giving notice may elect in which paper the notice shall be published. If no weekly newspaper is published within the county, service of the notice shall be made by publication in any other weekly newspaper within the state published nearest the mine. The notice shall be published at least once a week for a period of 90 days after the first publication.

**517.260 Notice; return and proof of service.** If the notice is served by any sheriff as provided in ORS 517.250, the sheriff shall make return by filing the notice with the return showing service with the county recorder, or if there is none, with the county clerk, for the county within which the mine is situated. If personal service cannot be had as provided in ORS 517.250, proof of service shall be made by filing with the county recorder, or if there is none, with the county clerk of the county in which the mine is situated, the notice as published, attached to an affidavit made by the printer, foreman, or publisher of the newspaper, to the effect that it is of general circulation throughout the county, is published weekly, and that the notice was published at least once a week in that newspaper for a period of not less than 90 days after the first publication of the notice.

**517.270 Vesting of interest of delinquent co-owner.** If at the expiration of 90 days from the date of personal service of the notice upon the delinquent co-owner or from the date of the last publication of the notice, the delinquent co-owner has not paid the proportion of the delinquent co-owner to the co-owners who performed or caused to be performed the assessment work, the title to the interest of the delinquent co-owner in the mine shall be immediately vested in the co-owners who performed or caused to be performed the assessment work.

**517.280 Certificate of ownership; issuance.** The co-owners who performed the assessment work may file with the county clerk of the county where the mine is situated, their affidavits that the payment has not been

made. Upon the filing of such affidavits, the clerk shall record the notice, proof of service and affidavits in the Mineral and Mining Record. The clerk shall then and there issue to the co-owners who performed or caused to be performed the assessment work, a certificate to the effect that the clerk has recorded the notice, proof of service and affidavits of nonpayment, and that the co-owners who performed or caused to be performed the assessment work have become and are the owners of all the right, title and interest of the delinquent co-owner or co-owners of the property. [Amended by 1991 c.230 §30; 1999 c.654 §34]

**517.290 Fee for certificate.** The certificate described in ORS 517.280 shall not be issued until the co-owners entitled to it pay to the clerk a fee as set by ORS 205.320. [Amended by 1971 c.621 §35; 1975 c.607 §38; 1979 c.833 §33; 1991 c.230 §31]

**517.300 Effect of certificate; certified copy of certificate, notice and return admissible as evidence.** (1) A certificate issued as provided in ORS 517.280 shall be equivalent to a deed from a delinquent co-owner of all the interest of the delinquent co-owner in and to all mines described in the notice, and shall convey the interest of the delinquent co-owner in the premises to the co-owner or co-owners who performed or caused to be performed the assessment work. The certificate may be introduced in evidence in any cause where ownership of the property may become material. When so introduced, it shall have the same force and effect as would a duly executed and delivered deed from the delinquent co-owner.

(2) A certified copy of the certificate, and of the notice and return, when made and certified to by the county clerk, shall be admissible in evidence in any trial where it is material to establish proof of service of the notice or ownership of the property.

**517.310 Recording and indexing certificate; fee; effect.** The certificate given by the county clerk shall be recorded in the office of the officer issuing it, upon payment of the fee established under ORS 205.320. The officer shall record and index the certificates in the Mineral and Mining Record. Such indexing and recording shall have the same force and effect as the indexing and recording of deeds to other real property, and shall give like constructive notice. [Amended by 1999 c.654 §35]

**517.320 Counteraffidavits of delinquent owner; suit to quiet title; judgment.** If prior to the issuing of the certificate there has been filed with the county clerk an affidavit by the delinquent co-owner that the payment has been made, the clerk shall not issue a certificate, but the parties shall be left to establish such fact by suit to quiet the title to the premises. If in the suit it appears either that the assessment work was not performed by the co-owners claiming to have performed it, or that the delinquent co-owner has performed or paid the delinquent co-owner's proportion of the assessment work, a judgment shall be entered in the suit to that effect; but if it is established that the assessment has been performed by or has been caused to be performed by the co-owners so claiming and that the delinquent co-owner has not performed or paid the delinquent co-owner's proportion, a judgment shall be entered providing that the co-owners who performed the assessment work to be the owners of all the interest of the delinquent co-owner in the premises. The judgment shall be entitled to record in the Mineral and Mining Record kept by the county clerk in the county, and shall be indexed in the Mineral and Mining Record for the county. [Amended by 1999 c.654 §36; 2003 c.576 §467]

**517.330 Accounting for fees.** All fees collected under ORS 517.290 and 517.310 are the property of the county in which they are collected, and shall be accounted for by the officer collecting them as other recording fees are accounted for.

**517.410** [Amended by 1961 c.419 §1; part renumbered 273.920; remainder renumbered 273.355]

**517.420** [Amended by 1955 c.528 §1; 1961 c.419 §2; 1983 c.740 §206; repealed by 1993 c.340 §2]

## MINING LEASES

**517.430 Use of timber by lessee.** (1) The lessee of the Department of State Lands under ORS 273.551 may use down timber found on the premises for fuel, and may cut and use green timber in the construction of

buildings required in the operation of a mine on the premises, or for lining test pits or shafts, or for timbering drifts or excavations, or for other mining purposes, but for no other purpose.

(2) The lessee of the State Forester under ORS 273.551 may use down timber found on the premises for fuel and may cut and use green timber for lining test pits or shafts, or for timbering drifts or excavations, or for other mining purposes, but for no other purpose. [Amended by 1953 c.65 §5]

**517.440 Lessee, licensee, or operator of mine deemed bailee of yield until payment of lessor and workers.** Any lessee, licensee, or person other than the owner, who operates or works a mine, lode, mining claim, or deposit yielding metal or mineral of any kind, has custody and control of whatever metal or mineral may be produced in such operation or work, as bailee only and not as owner, until the sum due the lessor is paid and the wages due from such lessee to the lessor or to any worker who has performed labor under contract of service on, in or about such mine, lode, mining claim, or deposit are wholly paid.

**517.450** [Repealed by 1971 c.743 §432]

**517.510** [Repealed by 1993 c.742 §114]

**517.520** [Repealed by 1993 c.742 §114]

**517.530** [Repealed by 1993 c.742 §114]

**517.540** [Repealed by 1993 c.742 §114]

**517.550** [Repealed by 1993 c.742 §114]

**517.610** [Repealed by 1953 c.188 §2]

**517.611** [1957 c.580 §1; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.620** [Repealed by 1953 c.188 §2]

**517.621** [1957 c.580 §2; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.630** [Repealed by 1953 c.188 §2]

**517.631** [1957 c.580 §3; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.640** [Repealed by 1953 c.188 §2]

**517.641** [1957 c.580 §4; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.650** [1957 c.580 §5; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.660** [1957 c.580 §6; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.670** [1957 c.580 §7; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.680** [1957 c.580 §8; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.690** [1957 c.580 §9; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.700** [1957 c.580 §10; repealed by 1987 c.260 §1]

**517.702 Legislative findings.** (1) The Legislative Assembly finds and declares that:

(a) Mineral exploration is recognized as an integral part of the mineral industry with inherently less risk to the environment than surface or underground mining operations.

(b) Mineral exploration assists in the orderly identification of mineral resources in the state.

(c) Mineral exploration activities are recognized as distinct from operational activities.

(2) The Legislative Assembly, therefore, declares that the purposes of ORS 517.702 to 517.755, 517.790, 517.810, 517.910 and 517.920 are to encourage efficient and environmentally sound identification and development of the mineral resources of this state. [Formerly 517.960]

**517.705 Exploration permit; application; information required; confidentiality of production records, mineral assessments or trade secrets.** (1) Any person engaging in onshore exploration that disturbs more than one surface acre or involves drilling to greater than 50 feet shall obtain an exploration permit. Prior to receiving an exploration permit, an applicant shall submit a permit application on a form provided by the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. Information required shall include the information necessary to assess impacts of the proposed exploration, including but not limited to:

(a) The name and address of the surface owner and mineral owner.

(b) The names and addresses of the persons conducting the exploration.

(c) The name and address of any designated agent.

(d) A brief description of the exploration activities, including but not limited to:

(A) The amount of road to be constructed;

(B) The number, depth and location of proposed drill holes;

(C) The number, depth and location of proposed monitoring wells; and

(D) The number, length, width and depth of exploration trenches.

(e) Provisions for the reclamation of surface disturbance caused by exploration activities.

(f) Exploration drill hole or monitoring well abandonment procedures, including but not limited to:

(A) The capping of all holes;

(B) The plugging of any hole producing surface flow; and

(C) Appropriate sealing for any holes which have encountered aquifers.

(g) A map with the location of the proposed exploration and delineation of exploration boundaries.

(2) Any production records, mineral assessments or trade secrets submitted as part of the application under subsection (1) of this section shall be confidential. [Formerly 517.962; 1999 c.492 §11]

**517.710 Fees.** (1) A fee, not to exceed \$400 shall accompany the application described in ORS 517.705. The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may renew the permit annually on the anniversary date of the issuance of the permit, provided the person conducting the exploration is not in violation of any provision of ORS 517.702 to 517.755, 517.790, 517.810, 517.910 and 517.920 and pays a renewal fee not to exceed \$300.

(2) A permit shall be subject to suspension and revocation as provided by ORS 517.702 to 517.755, 517.790, 517.810, 517.910 and 517.920. [Formerly 517.964]

**517.715 Exemptions from permit requirement.** (1) When exploration will result in less than one acre of surface disturbance or drilling to 50 feet or less, any person conducting exploration is exempted from the requirements of the permit procedure described in ORS 517.702 to 517.740. However, nothing in this section exempts a person from the requirements of ORS chapter 273 or the requirements of other departments.

(2) All mineral exploration drill holes shall comply with the abandonment procedures specified in ORS 517.705 (1)(f). [Formerly 517.966; 1999 c.492 §12]

**517.720 Persons with operating permit exempted.** The provisions of ORS 517.702 to 517.740 do not apply if the applicant has obtained an operating permit, described in ORS 517.790, for the area described in the exploration permit. [Formerly 517.968; 1999 c.492 §13]

**517.725 Department inspection of exploration site.** (1) The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may inspect the exploration site prior to initiation of exploration to review the existing environmental conditions, assess impacts of the proposed exploration and establish the amount of financial assurance required.



(2) The department may inspect lands not later than 60 days following notification by the person conducting the exploration that reclamation is complete. If the department determines that the reclamation complies with the approved reclamation plan, including establishment of vegetation, the department may release the bond or other security required by ORS 517.810 within 60 days of that determination.

(3) The department is authorized to inspect any ongoing exploration site in order to establish compliance with ORS 517.702 to 517.755, 517.790, 517.810, 517.910 and 517.920. [Formerly 517.970]

**517.730 Drill hole or well abandonment; rules.** (1) The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall consult with the Water Resources Department on the development of rules covering drill hole or monitoring well abandonment procedures, including procedures for the abandonment of holes and wells for which no exploration permit is required in ORS 517.705.

(2) Nothing in ORS 517.702 to 517.755, 517.790, 517.810, 517.910 and 517.920 prohibits the conversion of exploration drill holes or monitoring wells to water wells, provided that the conversion conforms to the standards and rules of the Water Resources Department. [Formerly 517.972]

**517.735 Exploration on land administered by Department of State Lands.** The Department of State Lands and the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall coordinate the regulation of any exploration project on land administered by the Department of State Lands. [Formerly 517.974]

**517.740 Rules.** In consultation with the Environmental Quality Commission, Water Resources Commission and the State Land Board, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries governing board shall adopt rules to carry out the provisions of ORS 517.702 to 517.755, 517.790, 517.810, 517.910 and 517.920. [Formerly 517.976]

## RECLAMATION OF MINING LANDS

(Generally)

**517.750 Definitions for ORS 517.702 to 517.989.** As used in ORS 517.702 to 517.989, unless the context requires otherwise:

(1) “Board” means the governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries.

(2) “Completion” means termination of surface mining activities including reclamation of the surface-mined land in accordance with the approved reclamation plan and operating permit.

(3) “Cooperating agency” means the State Department of Agriculture, the State Department of Fish and Wildlife or any agency that has statutory responsibility related to a mining operation but that does not issue a permit for the mining operation.

(4) “Department” means the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries.

(5) “Exploration” means all activities conducted on or beneath the surface of the earth for the purpose of determining presence, location, extent, grade or economic viability of a deposit. “Exploration” does not include prospecting or chemical processing of minerals.

(6) “Explorer” means a person that is engaged in exploration.

(7) “Landowner” means:

(a) The person possessing fee title to the natural mineral deposit being surface mined or explored; and

(b) The owner of an equitable interest in land that is subject to a deed of trust.

(8) “Minerals” includes soil, coal, clay, stone, sand, gravel, metallic ore and any other solid material or substance excavated for commercial, industrial or construction use from natural deposits situated within or upon lands in this state.

(9) “Operator” means any individual, public or private corporation, political subdivision, agency, board or department of this state, any municipality, partnership, association, firm, trust, estate or any other legal entity whatsoever that is engaged in surface mining operations.

(10) “Overburden” means the soil, rock and similar materials that lie above natural deposits of minerals.

(11) “Person” means any person, any federal agency or any public body, as defined in ORS 174.109.

(12) “Processing” includes, but is not limited to, crushing, washing, milling and screening as well as the batching and blending of mineral aggregate into asphalt and portland cement concrete located within the

operating permit area.

(13) "Reclamation" means the employment in a surface mining operation or exploration of procedures reasonably designed to:

(a) Minimize, as much as practicable, the adverse effects of the surface mining operation or exploration on land, air and water resources; and

(b) Provide for the rehabilitation of surface resources adversely affected by the surface mining operations or exploration through the rehabilitation of plant cover, soil stability and water resources and through other measures that contribute to the subsequent beneficial use of the explored, mined or reclaimed lands.

(14) "Reclamation plan" means a written proposal, submitted to the department as required by ORS 517.702 to 517.989 and subsequently approved by the department as provided in ORS 517.702 to 517.989, for the reclamation of the land area adversely affected by a surface mining operation or exploration and including, but not limited to the following information:

(a) Proposed measures to be undertaken by the operator in protecting the natural resources of adjacent lands.

(b) Proposed measures for the rehabilitation of the explored or surface-mined lands and the procedures to be applied.

(c) The procedures to be applied in the surface mining operation or exploration to control the discharge of contaminants and the disposal of surface mining refuse.

(d) The procedures to be applied in the surface mining operation or exploration in the rehabilitation of affected stream channels and stream banks to a condition minimizing erosion, sedimentation and other factors of pollution.

(e) The map required by ORS 517.790 (1)(e) and such other maps and supporting documents as may be requested by the department.

(f) A proposed time schedule for the completion of reclamation operations.

(g) Requirements of the exploration permit.

(15) "Surface impacts of underground mining" means all waste materials produced by underground mining and placed upon the surface including, but not limited to, waste dumps, mill tailings, washing plant fines and all surface subsidence related to underground mining.

(16)(a) "Surface mining" includes:

(A) All or any part of the process of mining minerals by the removal of overburden and the extraction of natural mineral deposits thereby exposed by any method by which more than 5,000 cubic yards of minerals are extracted or by which at least one acre of land is affected within a period of 12 consecutive calendar months, including open-pit mining operations, auger mining operations, processing, surface impacts of underground mining, production of surface mining refuse and the construction of adjacent or off-site borrow pits, except those constructed for use as access roads.

(B) Removal or filling, or both, within the beds or banks of any waters of this state that is the subject of a memorandum of agreement between the Department of State Lands and the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries in which the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries is assigned sole responsibility for permitting as described in ORS 517.797.

(b) "Surface mining" does not include:

(A) Excavations of sand, gravel, clay, rock or other similar materials conducted by the landowner or tenant for the primary purpose of construction, reconstruction or maintenance of access roads on the same parcel or on an adjacent parcel that is under the same ownership as the parcel that is being excavated;

(B) Excavation or grading operations, reasonably necessary for farming;

(C) Nonsurface effects of underground mining;

(D) Removal of rock, gravel, sand, silt or other similar substances removed from the beds or banks of any waters of this state pursuant to a permit issued under ORS 196.800 to 196.900;

(E) Excavations or reprocessing of aggregate material, or grading operations, within the highway right of way reasonably necessary for the construction, reconstruction or maintenance of a highway as defined in ORS 801.305;

(F) Excavation or movement of materials on site at a landfill, as defined in ORS 459.005, for the primary purpose of construction, reconstruction or maintenance of access roads or for landfill operations, including but not limited to landfill cell construction and daily, interim and final cover operations, if the excavation or movement of materials is covered by a permit issued by the Department of Environmental Quality under ORS 459.205 to 459.385;

(G) Excavation or grading operations necessary for construction and maintenance of utilities or drainage facilities, where the excavated material is used on site and is not sold into the commercial market as aggregate material; or

(H) Excavation or grading operations that:

(i) Are associated with on-site construction activities; and

(ii) Do not result in any excavated materials being sold into the commercial market.

(17) "Surface mining refuse" means all waste materials, soil, rock, mineral, liquid, vegetation and other materials resulting from or displaced by surface mining operations within the operating permit area, including all waste materials deposited in or upon lands within the operating permit area.

(18) "Underground mining" means all human-made excavations below the surface of the ground through shafts or adits for the purpose of exploring for, developing or producing valuable minerals. [1971 c.719 §2; 1975 c.724 §1; 1977 c.59 §1; 1981 c.622 §1; 1983 c.46 §1; 1985 c.292 §2; 1989 c.347 §12; 1999 c.353 §2; 2007 c.318 §5; 2009 c.279 §1; 2011 c.406 §2; 2017 c.736 §2; 2017 c.743 §1; 2019 c.502 §1]

**517.753 Exclusion certificate required for certain small-scale surface mining operations; application; fees.** (1) Notwithstanding the yard and acre limitations of ORS 517.750 (16), a person must obtain an exclusion certificate from the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to engage in surface mining that results in the extraction of 5,000 cubic yards or less of minerals or affects less than one acre of land within a period of 12 consecutive calendar months. Except as provided in ORS 517.755, a mining operation subject to a valid exclusion certificate is not subject to the operating permit or reclamation requirements set forth in ORS 517.702 to 517.989.

(2) A person shall submit an exclusion certificate application on a form provided by the department, accompanied by a fee not to exceed \$400. If the department does not approve or disapprove the application within 90 days after the date the application is filed with the department, the application shall be deemed approved.

(3) Each holder of an exclusion certificate shall annually pay to the department a renewal fee of \$150, accompanied by a description of:

(a) The amount of minerals extracted pursuant to the certificate during the previous 12 months;

(b) The total acreage of surface disturbance by the mining operation as of the date that the renewal is submitted; and

(c) Any additional information required by the department to determine that the mining operation continues to qualify for an exclusion certificate. [2015 c.834 §2; 2017 c.736 §12]

**Note:** 517.753 was added to and made a part of 517.702 to 517.989 by legislative action but was not added to any smaller series therein. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.755 Mining operations affecting more than five acres.** Notwithstanding the yard and acre limitations of ORS 517.750 (16), as soon as any mining operation begun after July 1, 1975, affects more than five acres of land the provisions of ORS 517.702 to 517.989 apply to the mining operation. [1975 c.724 §1a; 1979 c.435 §3; 1985 c.292 §3; 1985 c.565 §80; 1989 c.347 §13; 1999 c.353 §7; 2007 c.318 §15; 2017 c.736 §13]

**Note:** 517.755 was enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but was not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 517 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.760 Policy.** (1) The Legislative Assembly finds and declares that:

(a) It is the policy of the State of Oregon to recognize the important and essential contribution that the extraction of minerals makes to the economic well-being of the state and the nation and to prevent unacceptable adverse impacts to environmental, scenic, recreational, social, archaeological and historic resources of the state that may result from mining operations, while permitting operations that comply with the provisions set forth in ORS 517.702 to 517.951.

(b) Proper reclamation of surface-mined lands is necessary to prevent undesirable land and water conditions that would be detrimental to the general welfare, health, safety and property rights of the citizens of this state.

(c) Surface mining takes place in diverse areas where the geologic, topographic, climatic, biological and social conditions are significantly different and that reclamation operations and the specifications therefor must vary accordingly.

(d) It is not practical to extract minerals required by our society without disturbing the surface of the earth and producing waste materials and that the very character of many types of surface mining operations precludes complete restoration of the affected lands to their original condition.

(e) Reclamation of surface-mined lands as provided by ORS 517.702 to 517.951 will allow the mining of valuable minerals in a manner designed for the protection and subsequent beneficial use of the mined and reclaimed lands.

(2) The Legislative Assembly, therefore, declares that the purposes of ORS 517.702 to 517.951 are:

(a) To provide that the usefulness, productivity and scenic values of all lands and water resources affected by surface mining operations within this state shall receive the greatest practical degree of protection and reclamation necessary for their intended subsequent use.

(b) To provide for cooperation between private and governmental entities in carrying out the purposes of ORS 517.702 to 517.951 and reclamation of abandoned mined lands that may pose a hazard to public health, safety or the environment. [1971 c.719 §1; 1985 c.292 §4; 1993 c.342 §1]

**517.770 Exemptions from reclamation requirements.** (1) The following mining operations are exempt from the reclamation requirements set forth in ORS 517.702 to 517.989:

(a) Lands within the surfaces and contours of surface mines in existence on July 1, 1972, or vertical extensions of those surfaces and contours, provided that the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries issued a certificate of exemption to the mining operation on or before October 31, 2000.

(b) Lands within the surfaces and contours of surface mines in existence on July 1, 1972, or vertical extensions of those surfaces and contours, provided that:

(A) The surface mining operations at the site were allowed under a comparable certificate of exemption that was issued by a county and current on the date of repeal of a county zoning law or ordinance described in ORS 517.780 (1); and

(B) The landowner or operator applies for and receives a certificate of exemption from the department. An application for a certificate of exemption must be filed with the department within 90 days after the date the county's repeal of a zoning law or ordinance becomes effective. If the department does not approve or disapprove the application within 90 days after the date the application is filed with the department, the application will be deemed to be approved.

(c) Lands within the surfaces and contours of surface mining operations that are owned or operated by a person that, on July 1, 1972, was a party to a surface mining contract that was valid on January 1, 1971, provided that the department issued a certificate of exemption to the mining operation on or before September 20, 1985.

(2) A certificate of exemption terminates if the landowner or operator does not renew the certificate annually. [1971 c.719 §15; 1973 c.709 §1; 1975 c.724 §2; 1985 c.292 §5; 1987 c.260 §2; 1987 c.361 §1,1a; 1999 c.492 §1; 2009 c.270 §1]

**517.775 Permit fee for certain landowners and operators; erosion stabilization at mining operations exempt from reclamation.** Notwithstanding the provisions of ORS 517.770:

(1) Any landowner or operator conducting surface mining on July 1, 1972, shall pay the permit fee as provided in ORS 517.800; and

(2) The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall require the landowner or operator to complete erosion stabilization upon completion of mining at a mining operation exempt from reclamation under ORS 517.770. [1971 c.719 §17; 1979 c.435 §4; 1985 c.292 §17; 1987 c.260 §3; 1987 c.361 §2; 1999 c.492 §2; 2009 c.270 §2]

**517.780 Effect on county zoning laws or ordinances; rules; certain operations exempt.** (1)(a) The provisions of ORS 517.702 to 517.989 and the rules and regulations adopted thereunder do not supersede any county zoning laws or ordinances in effect on July 1, 1972. However, if the county zoning laws or ordinances are repealed on or after July 1, 1972, the provisions of ORS 517.702 to 517.989 and the rules and regulations adopted thereunder are controlling. The governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral

Industries may adopt rules and regulations with respect to matters covered by county zoning laws and ordinances in effect on July 1, 1972.

(b) If the county zoning laws or ordinances specified in paragraph (a) of this subsection are repealed by a county:

(A) The department may allow a surface mining operation that previously operated under a valid county operating permit and reclamation plan to continue to operate for a period not to exceed one year if the landowner or operator applies for an operating permit under ORS 517.790 within 60 days after the date the county's repeal of the zoning laws or ordinances becomes effective, pays all applicable fees to the department and submits a bond or security to the department as required by ORS 517.810. Pending issuance of an operating permit and approval of a reclamation plan by the department, the county permit is deemed to remain in effect and is enforceable by the department.

(B) The department, in issuing a permit and approving a reclamation plan for a surface mining operation that previously operated under a valid county operating permit as described in paragraph (a) of this subsection, may incorporate any provisions from the county operating permit into the permit issued by the department and the reclamation plan approved by the department if the department determines that the provisions provide adequate protection of the public health, safety and welfare and the environment.

(C) The department may issue a certificate of exemption from reclamation requirements as described in ORS 517.770 (1)(b).

(2) City or county operated surface mining operations that sell less than 5,000 cubic yards of minerals within a period of 12 consecutive calendar months are exempt from the state mining permit requirements of ORS 517.702 to 517.989 if the city or county adopts an ordinance that includes a general reclamation scheme establishing the means and methods of achieving reclamation for city or county operated surface mining sites exempted from the state permit requirements by this subsection. [1971 c.719 §16; 1975 c.724 §3; 1977 c.524 §1; 1979 c.435 §1; 1983 c.20 §1; 1985 c.292 §6; 1987 c.361 §9; 2003 c.14 §340; 2007 c.318 §6; 2009 c.270 §3]

**517.785** [1983 c.20 §3; 1985 c.292 §7; 1987 c.361 §8; repealed by 2007 c.318 §28]

**517.790 Operating permit required for surface mining on certain lands; application for permit; proposed reclamation plans; waiver of requirement for preparation and approval of reclamation plan; refusal to issue operating permit; provisional operating permit.** (1) A landowner or operator may not allow or engage in surface mining on land not surface mined on July 1, 1972, without holding a valid operating permit from the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries for the surface mining operation. A separate permit is required for each separate surface mining operation. A person seeking an operating permit from the department shall submit an application on a form provided by the department that contains the following information:

(a) The name and address of the landowner and the operator and the names and addresses of any persons designated by them as their agents for the service of process.

(b) The materials for which the operation is to be conducted.

(c) The type of surface mining to be employed in the operation.

(d) The proposed date for the initiation of the operation.

(e) The size and legal description of the lands that will be affected by the operation, and, if more than 10 acres of land will be affected by the operation and if the department determines that the conditions warrant it, a map of the lands to be surface mined that includes the boundaries of the affected lands, topographic details of the lands, the location and names of all streams, roads, railroads, utility facilities, wells, irrigation ditches, ponds, stockpiles, buffers, setbacks and excavation boundaries within or adjacent to the lands, the location of all proposed access roads to be protected or constructed in conducting the operation and the names and addresses of the owners of all surface and mineral interests of the lands included within the surface mining area.

(f) If practicable, a plan for visual screening by vegetation or otherwise that will be established and maintained on the lands within the operation for the purpose of screening the operation from the view of persons using adjacent public highways, public parks and residential areas.

(g) The type of monitoring well abandonment procedures.

(h) A proposed reclamation plan that is acceptable to and approved by the department.

(i) Any other information that the department considers pertinent in its review of the application.

(2) The department may waive the requirement for preparation and approval of a reclamation plan if:

(a) The operation is conducted as part of the on-site construction of a building, public works project or other physical improvement of the subject property;

(b) The operation is reasonably necessary for such construction; and

(c) The proposed improvements are authorized by the local jurisdiction with land use authority.

(3) The department may not issue an operating permit to an operator other than the owner or owners of the surface and mineral interests of the lands included within the surface mining area unless the operator:

(a) Has written approval from the owner or owners of all surface and mineral interests of the lands included within the surface mining area; and

(b) Maintains a legal interest in the lands that is sufficient to ensure that the operator has the authority to operate and reclaim the lands as provided in the operating permit and reclamation plan.

(4) The department may refuse to issue an operating permit to a person who has not, in the determination of the department, substantially complied with the conditions of an operating permit or reclamation plan, the provisions of this chapter or the rules adopted by the department to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

(5) The department shall issue a provisional operating permit to an applicant that has not obtained all required federal, state and local permits and approvals for the proposed mining operation, provided:

(a) The applicant has complied with this chapter and the rules adopted by the department to carry out the purposes of this chapter; and

(b) The permit:

(A) Does not become effective until the applicant obtains all required permits and approvals; and

(B) Contains conditions:

(i) Requiring the applicant to obtain an amendment to the provisional operating permit if necessary to conform with a subsequently obtained federal, state or local permit or approval; and

(ii) Prohibiting the applicant from allowing or engaging in any surface mining operations on the land prior to the effective date of the provisional operating permit. [1971 c.719 §4; 1973 c.709 §2; 1987 c.361 §10; 1989 c.347 §10; 1999 c.353 §3; 2007 c.318 §7; 2017 c.736 §3]

**517.795 Department to consult with and cooperate with other agencies.** (1) The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall consult with other state agencies as necessary to ensure that rules developed by the department and those agencies regarding exploration or monitoring well requirements for sites described under ORS 517.790 do not conflict.

(2) The department and any other state agencies imposing requirements for exploration or monitoring wells for sites described under ORS 517.790 may enter into agreements for the department to act on behalf of the agencies in informing the landowner or operator of the requirements and overseeing enforcement of the requirements. [1997 c.184 §1]

**Note:** 517.795 was enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but was not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 517 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.797 Memorandum of agreement with Department of State Lands regarding permitting.** (1) As used in this section, “surface mining” has the meaning given that term in ORS 517.750 and “waters of this state” has the meaning given that term in ORS 196.800.

(2) The Department of State Lands and the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may enter into a memorandum of agreement concerning surface mining as described in subsection (3) of this section.

(3) The memorandum described in subsection (2) of this section may assign sole responsibility for permitting to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries when the surface mining would otherwise be under the permitting jurisdiction of both the Department of State Lands and the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries because:

(a) Part of the surface mining is located within the beds or banks of any waters of this state; and

(b) Part of the surface mining is located upland from the beds or banks of any waters of this state.

(4) Prior to any permitting pursuant to the provisions of subsection (3) of this section, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall consult with the Department of State Lands regarding any conditions necessary to protect the waters of this state. [2011 c.406 §1]

**Note:** 517.797 was enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but was not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 517 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.800 Fees; rules; annual report.** (1)(a) Except for an application for a mining operation submitted under ORS 517.910 to 517.989, each applicant for an operating permit under ORS 517.702 to 517.989 shall pay to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries a fee established by the State Geologist in an amount not to exceed \$1,750.

(b) If an application for a new permit or an amendment to an existing permit requires extraordinary department resources because of concerns about slope stability or proximity to waters of the state or other environmentally sensitive areas, the applicant shall pay to the department an additional fee in an amount determined by the State Geologist to be adequate to cover the additional costs for staff and other related expenses. The State Geologist shall consult with the applicant when determining the amount of the fee.

(2) Annually, each holder of an operating permit shall pay to the department a base fee of \$850, plus \$0.0095 per ton of aggregate or mineral ore extracted during the previous 12-month period.

(3) If a reclamation plan is changed, the operator may be assessed for staff time and other related costs an amount not to exceed \$1,750 in addition to the annual renewal fee. This subsection does not apply to a mining operation that is subject to the fee established by ORS 517.973 (2)(a).

(4) If, at operator request, the department responds to requests for information required by a local government in making a land use planning decision on behalf of the operator for a specific site, the State Geologist may require the operator to pay the department a fee for staff time and related costs. The department shall notify the operator in advance of the estimated costs of providing the information, and the actual amount assessed shall not exceed the estimate provided by the department.

(5) The State Geologist may require the operator of a site to pay to the department a special inspection fee in an amount not to exceed \$500 for an inspection conducted under the following circumstances:

(a) Investigation of surface mining operations conducted without the operating permit required under ORS 517.790; or

(b) Investigation of surface mining operations conducted outside the area authorized in an operating permit.

(6) Upon request of an applicant or operator, the department shall provide an itemized list and documentation of expenses used to determine a fee under subsection (1)(b), (3) or (4) of this section.

(7) Notwithstanding the per ton fee established in subsection (2) of this section, the governing board of the department may lower to zero or raise the per ton fee up to \$0.0095 if necessary to provide financial certainty to the department or to reflect actual expenses of the department in administering ORS 517.702 to 517.951.

(8) All fees collected by the department under this section shall be deposited in the Mined Land Regulation and Reclamation Program Subaccount within the Geology and Mineral Industries Account. The department shall prepare and submit to the governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries an annual report on the financial status of the Mined Land Regulation and Reclamation Program Subaccount.

(9) The governing board of the department:

(a) Shall adopt by rule a procedure for the administrative review of the determinations of fees under this section.

(b) Shall adopt rules establishing the payment date for annual fees required under this section.

(c) May adopt rules establishing a late fee of up to five percent of the unpaid amount of an annual fee owed under this section if the annual fee is more than 60 days past due. [1971 c.719 §7; 1973 c.709 §3; 1977 c.524 §2; 1979 c.435 §2; 1981 c.274 §1; 1983 c.88 §1; 1985 c.292 §8; 1987 c.598 §1; 1989 c.346 §1; 1991 c.735 §28; 1993 c.399 §1; 1995 c.79 §297; 1997 c.62 §1; 1999 c.353 §4; 2003 c.520 §1; 2005 c.650 §§1,1a; 2007 c.318 §16; 2013 c.371 §29; 2015 c.834 §3]

**517.810 Requirement for bond or security; rules; other security in lieu of bond.** (1) Before issuing or reissuing an operating permit for any surface mining operation or issuing or reissuing an exploration permit for any exploration activity, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall require that the applicant for the permit file with it a bond or security acceptable to the department in a sum to be determined by the department but in an amount not to exceed the total cost for reclamation if the department were to perform the reclamation. The decision of the department may be appealed to the governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries as provided in ORS chapter 183. The bond or security shall be conditioned upon

the faithful performance of the reclamation plan and of the other requirements of ORS 517.702 to 517.989 and the rules adopted thereunder.

(2) Nothing in this section shall apply to any public body, as defined in ORS 174.109.

(3) In lieu of the bond or other security required of the applicant in subsection (1) of this section, the department may accept a similar security from the landowner, equal to the estimated cost of reclamation as determined by the department in consultation with the operator or explorer. The decision of the department may be appealed to the governing board as provided in ORS chapter 183.

(4) In lieu of the bond required by subsection (1) of this section, the department may accept a blanket bond covering two or more surface mining sites or exploration projects operated by a single company, owned by a single landowner or operated by all members of an established trade association, in an amount, established by the department, not to exceed the amount of the bonds that would be required for separate sites.

(5) The governing board shall identify by rule the procedures for the determination of the amount of the bond or other security required of an applicant for an operating permit or exploration permit. The rules:

(a) Shall provide an opportunity for participation by the applicant as part of the procedures; and

(b) May allow for the amount of the bond to be calculated and adjusted based upon the total area expected to be in a disturbed condition in the following year as a result of the surface mining or exploration operation.

(6) Any deposit of moneys accepted and held by the department as a form of security pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be deposited in the Reclamation Guarantee Fund. [1971 c.719 §8; 1975 c.724 §4; 1979 c.435 §5; 1983 c.497 §1; 1985 c.291 §1a; 1985 c.292 §9; 1987 c.361 §5; 1989 c.347 §11; 1999 c.492 §3; 2005 c.34 §6; 2015 c.834 §4]

**517.813 Reclamation Guarantee Fund.** (1) The Reclamation Guarantee Fund is established in the State Treasury, separate and distinct from the General Fund. The Reclamation Guarantee Fund shall consist of deposits of moneys received under ORS 517.810.

(2) Interest earned on the Reclamation Guarantee Fund shall be paid to the State Treasury and deposited in the General Fund to the credit of the Geology and Mineral Industries Account.

(3) The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall annually prepare and submit to the governing board of the department a report on the financial status of the Reclamation Guarantee Fund. [2015 c.834 §5]

**Note:** 517.813 was enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but was not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 517 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.815 Reclamation bond pooling program; requirements; rules.** (1) The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may establish and administer a program that provides for the pooling of reclamation bonds to assist:

(a) An operator in complying with the reclamation bond requirements of ORS 517.810;

(b) A person engaging in small mining operations or small exploration projects on federally managed lands to comply with financial guarantee requirements imposed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-579) or regulations adopted to implement the Act under 43 U.S.C. 1740; or

(c) A person engaging in any form of mining or exploration to comply with bonding requirements imposed pursuant to county ordinance.

(2) The program must:

(a) Be designed to reduce the financial burden of obtaining a reclamation bond for mining or exploration.

(b) Require each person participating in the program to:

(A) Pay an amount into the pool each year that is actuarially determined to enable the program to be self-sustaining and pay for the costs of the department in administering the program;

(B) Execute an agreement, on a form provided by the department, to indemnify the pool for any claims made against the reclamation bond; and

(C) Provide security approved by the State Geologist, if the State Geologist considers security necessary to ensure against the possible forfeiture of the reclamation bond.

(c) Use the moneys in the pool to cover the bonded liability of persons participating in the program.

(d) Provide a limit on the total bonded liability of any person that may be covered under the program.



(e) Provide conditions for the release or forfeiture of bonds.

(f) Provide that a person that participates in the program has obtained security acceptable to the department as required by ORS 517.810.

(3) The department may adopt rules relating to the development and administration of the program established under this section. [2003 c.646 §2]

**Note:** 517.815 was added to and made a part of 517.702 to 517.989 by legislative action but was not added to any smaller series therein. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.820 Extensions of time for submission of proposed reclamation plans; time limit for reclamation completion; consultation with cooperating agencies.** (1) Upon good cause shown, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may grant reasonable extensions of time for the completion by the landowner or operator and the submission to the department of a proposed reclamation plan required by ORS 517.790. Each reclamation plan submitted to the department must provide that all reclamation activities shall be completed within three years after the termination of mineral extraction from the surface mining operation conducted within each separate area for which an operating permit is requested. Each such reclamation plan shall be approved by the department if it adequately provides for the reclamation of surface-mined lands.

(2) Prior to approving a proposed reclamation plan, the department shall consult with all other cooperating agencies and appropriate local planning authorities. [1971 c.719 §5; 1977 c.59 §2; 2007 c.318 §17; 2017 c.736 §4]

**517.825 Mining aggregate on high-value farmland; requirements; rules.** (1) As used in this section, “significant aggregate resource” means the average minimum depth of aggregate, determined by rule of the Land Conservation and Development Commission, that is required for a local government to find that the aggregate resource is significant pursuant to a statewide land use planning goal that protects natural resources and conserves scenic, historic and open space resources.

(2) When the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries issues an operating permit under ORS 517.790 for mining aggregate on high-value farmland composed predominantly of Class I and Class II soils in the Willamette Valley, the department shall require:

(a) An operator or owner to excavate substantially all of the significant aggregate resource within the operating permit boundary, not including any buffer, setback and sloping areas:

(A) To the extent that the removal of the significant aggregate resource can be done in a manner that is consistent with operating permit conditions imposed by the department; and

(B) Subject to limitations imposed by other federal, state or local regulatory requirements.

(b) An applicant to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the department that the operator or owner has the mechanical ability to comply with paragraph (a) of this subsection.

(c) Performance of the requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection before approving final reclamation and closure of the mining operation, unless:

(A) The operator or owner defaults as described in ORS 517.860; or

(B) Performance is not required due to changed conditions or new information that justify a permit modification under ORS 517.831.

(3) The acceptance by the department of a plan to mine in compliance with subsection (2)(a) of this section does not establish a depth standard for purposes of land use permits or authorizations.

(4) The time limitations imposed on the department under ORS 517.830 do not apply to an application for an operating permit, or the transfer of a permit under ORS 517.833, that is subject to this section.

(5) This section does not require the operator or owner to provide bond or security to excavate to the permitted depth. [2013 c.706 §3]

**517.830 Operating permit approval process; appeal from denial of plan; consolidated application process.** (1) Upon receipt of an application for an operating permit, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall:

(a) Inspect the operating site described in the application;

(b) Provide notice to the local jurisdiction and an opportunity for the local jurisdiction to, within 30 days after the date of the notice, request that the department delay a decision on an operating permit and reclamation

plan as provided in subsection (4) of this section; and

(c) If the application is not subject to the consolidated application process under ORS 517.952 to 517.989, provide notice to each federal and state permitting agency, as defined in ORS 517.952, and each cooperating agency and provide an opportunity for the agencies to, within 30 days after the date of the notice, respond in writing to the department identifying reasonably expected adverse effects of the proposed mining operation on land, air, water or wildlife resources.

(2) Within 90 days after the date that the application and the required permit fee are received, the department shall issue the operating permit applied for or, if it considers the application incomplete, return the application to the applicant for correction of the deficiencies indicated by the department. An operating permit that is not subject to ORS 517.952 to 517.989 shall contain reasonable conditions designed to avoid or minimize an adverse effect identified by an agency pursuant to subsection (1)(c) of this section, provided:

(a) A permit issued by a federal, state or local permitting agency approving the mining operation does not include provisions to mitigate the adverse effect; and

(b) The land use decision issued by the local government approving the mining operation does not include provisions to mitigate the adverse effect.

(3) Failure by the department to act upon the reclamation plan submitted with an application for an operating permit within the 90-day period referred to in subsection (2) of this section is not a denial by the department of the operating permit applied for. The department, pending final approval of a reclamation plan, may issue a provisional permit subject to reasonable limitations that may be prescribed by the department and conditioned upon the applicant's compliance with the bond and security requirements established by ORS 517.810.

(4)(a) Notwithstanding subsections (2) and (3) of this section, if an application involves an aggregate site that requires a permit issued pursuant to ORS 215.427 or 227.178, and if the local jurisdiction requests that the application not be decided until the local jurisdiction has taken final action, the department shall make a final decision on the operating permit and reclamation plan no later than 165 days after the date a complete land use application is submitted to the local jurisdiction, unless the applicant agrees to allow additional time under ORS 215.427, 215.429, 227.178 or 227.179. If a plan amendment is required as part of issuance of a permit, the provisions of paragraph (b) of this subsection apply. The department may not approve an operating permit and reclamation plan if the land use application is denied.

(b) Notwithstanding subsections (2) and (3) of this section, if an application involves an aggregate site that requires amendment to a comprehensive plan, as defined in ORS 197.015, and if the local jurisdiction requests that the application not be decided until the local jurisdiction has taken final action on the plan amendment, the department may not make a final decision on the operating permit and reclamation plan until the local jurisdiction has taken final action on the plan amendment. The department shall make its final decision within 45 days of the date that the local jurisdiction has taken final action on the plan amendment. The department may not approve an operating permit and reclamation plan if the plan amendment is denied.

(5) Conditions and requirements imposed on an operating permit and reclamation plan, and modifications thereto, issued subsequent to issuance of a local jurisdiction permit shall be compatible with the requirements and conditions of the local government permit, unless more stringent requirements are necessary to comply with the provisions of ORS 517.750 to 517.901.

(6)(a) If a local jurisdiction does not request that the department delay a decision on an operating permit and reclamation plan as provided in subsections (1)(b) and (4) of this section, the department shall, prior to issuing the operating permit, give the local jurisdiction notice and an opportunity to provide comments and the following information about the proposed operating permit and reclamation plan:

(A) Information about any applicable local land use regulations;

(B) Whether the site described in the proposed operating permit and reclamation plan is included on a local government inventory required by any open spaces, scenic and historic areas and natural resources land use planning goal;

(C) A statement that an application has or has not been filed for local approval; and

(D) Any other information that the local jurisdiction considers pertinent in its review of the application.

(b) A local jurisdiction shall respond to a notice provided under paragraph (a) of this subsection within 35 days after the date of the notice.

(7) If the department refuses to approve a submitted reclamation plan, it shall notify the applicant, in writing, of its reasons for the refusal to approve the reclamation plan, including additional requirements as may be prescribed by the department for inclusion in the reclamation plan. Within 60 days after the receipt of the notice,

the applicant shall comply with the additional requirements prescribed by the department for the reclamation plan or file with the department a notice of appeal from the decision of the department with respect to the reclamation plan. If a notice of appeal is filed with the department by the applicant, the department may issue a provisional permit to the applicant.

(8) If an application is submitted as part of the consolidated application process under ORS 517.952 to 517.989, review of the application and approval or denial of the application shall be in accordance with ORS 517.952 to 517.989. However, the review and approval or denial shall take into consideration all policy considerations for issuing a permit under ORS 517.702 to 517.989. [1971 c.719 §6; 1975 c.724 §5; 1985 c.292 §10; 1991 c.243 §2; 1991 c.735 §29; 1999 c.353 §5; 1999 c.492 §4; 1999 c.533 §13; 2001 c.104 §226; 2007 c.318 §8; 2015 c.492 §1; 2017 c.736 §5]

**517.831 Modification of operating permit or reclamation plan; opportunity for alternative dispute resolution.** (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may not modify an operating permit or reclamation plan without the consent of the operator.

(2) The department may modify an operating permit or reclamation plan without the consent of the operator if, because of changed conditions at the permitted site or because of information otherwise not available to the department at the time of permit issuance or reclamation plan establishment, the department finds, by substantial evidence, that a modification is justified due to the potential for:

- (a) Substantial harm to off-site property;
- (b) Harm to threatened or endangered species; or
- (c) Channel changes or unstable pit walls.

(3) Modification of an operating permit or reclamation plan without the consent of the operator must be limited to the areas or matters affected by the changed conditions or new information.

(4) If the department modifies an operating permit or reclamation plan without the consent of the operator, the department must provide the operator with an opportunity for alternative dispute resolution in the manner provided in ORS 183.502. [2007 c.318 §4]

**517.832 Emergency operating permit; rules.** (1) Notwithstanding ORS 517.810 and 517.830, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may issue an emergency operating permit if:

- (a) A natural disaster, including but not limited to a flood or an earthquake, or the effects of a natural disaster threaten significant damage to property or to natural resources; and
- (b) A surface mining operation is necessary to abate the threat.

(2) The governing board of the department shall adopt rules governing the issuance of emergency operating permits. The rules shall include provisions:

(a) Ensuring that emergency operating permits are not issued over the objection of affected federal agencies or public bodies, as defined in ORS 174.109;

(b) Specifying the terms of an emergency operating permit;

(c) Establishing procedures for converting an emergency operating permit to a standard operating permit; and

(d) Establishing procedures for payment of fees under ORS 517.800. [2005 c.34 §3]

**517.833 Transfer of operating permit; rules.** (1) A person who by sale, assignment, lease or other means has succeeded in interest to an uncompleted surface mining operation may request that the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries release the existing operator from any reclamation obligations and transfer the operating permit to the successor. The department shall transfer the operating permit, unless:

(a) The successor does not agree to full assumption of the reclamation requirements in the operating permit and reclamation plan;

(b) The successor fails to provide a bond or security as required by ORS 517.810;

(c) More than one person has a claim to the property or operating permit and there is a dispute between the claimants that presents a justiciable controversy; or

(d) The successor, as the operator of another permitted site in this state, has failed to substantially comply with the conditions of an operating permit or reclamation plan, the provisions of ORS 517.702 to 517.989 or the rules adopted by the department to carry out the purposes of ORS 517.702 to 517.989.

(2) The governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may adopt rules relating to the responsibilities and duties of a person requesting a transfer of an operating permit under this section. [2007 c.318 §3]

**517.834 Temporary operating permit; rules.** (1) Notwithstanding ORS 517.810 and 517.830, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may issue a temporary operating permit to a person if:

(a) After consultation, the local jurisdiction with land use authority over the permitted site does not raise substantive objections to the issuance of the permit;

(b) All cooperating agencies approve of the permit issuance; and

(c) There is no objection from persons owning property adjacent to the permitted site.

(2) A temporary operating permit issued under this section is subject to reasonable limitations that may be prescribed by the department.

(3) Within 30 days after issuing the temporary operating permit, the operator shall:

(a) Comply with the bond and security requirements established by ORS 517.810;

(b) Pay any applicable fee pursuant to ORS 517.800; and

(c) Submit a reclamation plan to the department.

(4) The governing board of the department shall adopt rules governing the issuance of temporary operating permits. The rules shall include provisions:

(a) Ensuring opportunities for notice and comment by federal agencies;

(b) Specifying the terms of a temporary operating permit; and

(c) Establishing procedures for converting a temporary operating permit to a standard operating permit.

[2005 c.34 §4; 2017 c.736 §14]

**517.835 Conditions on operating permit or reclamation plan to prevent impact on ground water.** (1) Notwithstanding ORS 517.831, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may require conditions on any new or existing surface mining operating permit or reclamation plan sufficient to prevent or mitigate off-site impacts to ground water resources from the removal of water from surface mining operations. The department may include ground water monitoring as one of the conditions.

(2) The department shall consult with the operator and the Water Resources Department in assessing off-site impacts and in developing prevention or mitigation measures prior to imposing any conditions on an operating permit or reclamation plan pursuant to this section.

(3) As used in this section, “mitigation” has the meaning given that term in ORS 517.952. [2003 c.470 §2; 2007 c.318 §9; 2013 c.371 §30]

**Note:** 517.835 was added to and made a part of 517.702 to 517.989 by legislative action but was not added to any smaller series therein. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.836 Surveying or marking surface mining operations; rules.** (1)(a) The governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may adopt rules requiring the surveying or marking of surface mining operations.

(b) The rules may include, but are not limited to, requirements for maps or diagrams showing areas excavated or approved for excavation, setbacks or buffers established by the operating permit and the location of buildings, wells, ponds, haul roads, stockpiles, bodies of water and floodways.

(c) The rules may require that information required under this subsection be updated if the mining operations are subject to:

(A) A notice of violation under ORS 517.860;

(B) A suspension order under ORS 517.880; or

(C) A significant modification of the operating permit or reclamation plan under ORS 517.831.

(d) The rules may exempt mining operations from survey or marking requirements based on the size or location of the operations or on the distance of the operations from ground and surface waters.

(e) The rules must allow for reasonable compliance schedules for existing mining operations.

(2) The governing board may adopt rules requiring surface mining operators to collect and report information relating to amount and nature of materials excavated or processed at a surface mining operation and the impacts of mining operations on ground or surface water. [2007 c.318 §4a]

**517.837 Annual report by permittee; rules.** A person holding an operating permit issued pursuant to ORS 517.830 shall, no later than March 31 of each year, file an annual report with the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. The governing board of the department shall adopt rules describing the information relating to the permit and operations under the permit that must be included in the annual report. [2005 c.34 §2]

**517.840 Administration and enforcement of ORS 517.702 to 517.989; rules.** The governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall administer and enforce the provisions of ORS 517.702 to 517.989 and:

(1) May conduct or cause to be conducted investigations, research, experiments and demonstrations and may collect and disseminate information related to surface mining and the reclamation of surface-mined lands.

(2) May cooperate with other governmental and private agencies of this state or of other states and with agencies of the federal government, including the reimbursement for any services provided by such agencies to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries at its request.

(3) May apply for, accept and expend public and private funds made available for the reclamation of lands affected by surface mining in accordance with the purposes of ORS 517.702 to 517.989.

(4) May, in accordance with the applicable provisions of ORS chapter 183, adopt rules to carry out the provisions of ORS 517.702 to 517.989.

(5) Shall establish by rule a program to encourage voluntary reclamation practices that exceed the normal reclamation standards to provide maximum enhancement and benefits from mined lands. The program shall include incentives and other actions that will encourage voluntary reclamation practices.

(6) May receive and manage abandoned mined land funds received for abandoned mined land reclamation from the federal government. [1971 c.719 §3; 1985 c.292 §11; 1989 c.461 §1; 1993 c.342 §2; 1995 c.509 §2; 2007 c.318 §10; 2013 c.371 §27]

**517.850 Inspection of permit area.** At such reasonable times as the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may elect, the department, after reasonable advance notice has been given to the operator, may cause the permitted site to be inspected to determine if the operator has complied with the operating permit, reclamation plan, this chapter and the rules of the department. [1971 c.719 §9; 1997 c.183 §2; 2007 c.318 §18]

**517.855 Disruption of portion of mining property preserved from mining.** (1) Any portion of a mining property that is preserved from mining, including, but not limited to, a setback, buffer zone or no-impact area, may be excavated, reduced, added to, elevated, reshaped, contoured, graded or otherwise disrupted for the purpose of facilitating the reclamation of the mined area or integrating the reclaimed area with its surroundings.

(2) Subsection (1) of this section does not permit the removal for profit of any valuable mineral. [1997 c.186 §2]

**Note:** 517.855 was added to and made a part of 517.702 to 517.989 by legislative action but was not added to any smaller series therein. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.860 Effect of failure to comply with operating permit or reclamation plan; department may perform work and assess costs against bond or security.** (1) If, from inspections conducted pursuant to ORS 517.850 or from any other source, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries determines that the operator has not complied with or is not complying with the operating permit, the reclamation plan, the provisions of this chapter or the rules of the department, the department may issue either or both of the following to the operator:

(a) Written notice of the violation. The notice shall specifically outline the deficiencies.

(b) A compliance order. The order may specify a date by which the operator shall rectify any deficiencies. The department may extend the period if delays occasioned for causes beyond the operator's control necessitate more time, but only when the operator is, in the opinion of the department, making a reasonable effort to comply with the order.

(2) The department may recover against the bond or alternative form of financial security and reclaim the area affected by surface mining if the department determines that an operator:

(a) Has failed to comply with a department order issued under subsection (1) of this section;

(b) Fails to complete reclamation in conformance with the reclamation plan on any segment of the permitted site or fails to complete reclamation in a timely manner; or

(c) Fails to maintain an operating permit and pay all fees required under ORS 517.800.

(3) If the department makes a claim on the bond or security filed pursuant to ORS 517.810, the surety on the bond or holder of the other security shall pay to the department the amount of the bond or other security required. The department may reclaim the surface-mined land in a manner determined by the department, including by public or private contractor. If the amount is not paid within 30 days, the Attorney General, upon request of the department, shall institute proceedings to recover the amount.

(4) If the landowner has given security as provided in ORS 517.810 (3) and the operator is in default as specified in subsection (2) of this section, the landowner shall be held responsible for complying with the reclamation plan of the operator. The department shall furnish written notice of the default to the landowner and require the landowner to complete the reclamation as specified in the operator's reclamation plan acceptable to the department. If the landowner has not commenced action to rectify the deficiencies within 30 days after receiving notice, or if the landowner fails to diligently pursue reclamation in conformance with the plan, the department may demand payment of the amount of the bond or other security from the surety or other holder and otherwise proceed as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section.

(5) The department, in performing reclamation of surface-mined land, shall pursue a goal for reclamation designed to:

(a) Remove hazards;

(b) Protect from drainage problems and from pollution;

(c) Meet local land use requirements for reclamation; and

(d) Comply with all federal and state laws.

(6) The department may delay, for a reasonable time not to exceed one year, all or part of any reclamation activities if the department determines that it is likely that:

(a) Marketable mineral reserves exist at the permitted site; and

(b) A new operator will seek an operating permit for the site and assume all reclamation responsibilities.

[1971 c.719 §10; 1975 c.724 §6; 1977 c.59 §3; 1983 c.497 §2; 1985 c.291 §3; 1997 c.183 §1; 1999 c.353 §6; 1999 c.492 §5; 2007 c.318 §11]

**517.862 Revocation, termination or refusal to renew operating permit.** (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may not revoke, terminate or refuse to renew an operating permit if marketable reserves exist at the permitted site and if there is a significant potential for continued mining opportunities given reasonably foreseeable economic conditions.

(2) The department may revoke, terminate or refuse to renew an operating permit if the operator:

(a) Requests termination, provided that all reclamation requirements in the operating permit and reclamation plan have been satisfied;

(b) Fails to pay a fee as required by ORS 517.800 within 60 days of the due date;

(c) Fails to provide or maintain a bond or security as required by ORS 517.810;

(d) Fails to comply with an order issued under ORS 517.860; or

(e) Fails to comply with a suspension order issued under ORS 517.880.

(3) If an operating permit is revoked, terminated or not renewed, the operator may not perform any actions at the permitted site, except that the operator may, after receiving written approval from the department:

(a) Perform actions at the permitted site that are necessary to comply with reclamation requirements in the operating permit or reclamation plan, including but not limited to removal of mining-related stockpiles;

(b) Excavate materials at the permitted site that are necessary for reclamation; and

(c) Remove any excavated materials from buffers, setbacks or other areas not approved for disturbance and restore the areas to the approximate pre-mining contours with materials approved by the department.

(4) The department, in lieu of or in addition to revoking, terminating or refusing to renew an operating permit for the reasons specified in subsection (2) of this section, may recover against the bond or security filed pursuant to ORS 517.810 and reclaim the area affected by surface mining. [2007 c.318 §2]

**517.865 Effect of failure to perform reclamation and insufficient bond; lien; notice; priority; foreclosure.** (1) If an operator fails to faithfully perform the reclamation required by the reclamation plan and if the bond or security required by ORS 517.810 is not sufficient to compensate the State Department of Geology

and Mineral Industries for all reasonably necessary costs and expenses incurred by it in reclaiming the surface-mined land, the amount due shall be a lien in favor of the department upon all property, whether real or personal, belonging to the operator. However, for any operator that is first issued a permit after June 30, 1989, the lien shall not exceed \$2,500 for each site plus \$1,500 per acre.

(2) The lien shall attach upon the filing of a notice of claim of lien with the county clerk of the county in which the property is located. The notice of lien claim shall contain a true statement of the demand, the insufficiency of the bond or security to compensate the department and the failure of the operator to perform the reclamation required.

(3) The lien created by this section is prior to all other liens and encumbrances, except that the lien shall have equal priority with tax liens.

(4) The lien created by this section may be foreclosed by a suit in the circuit court in the manner provided by law for the foreclosure of other liens on real or personal property. [1975 c.724 §8; 1983 c.497 §3; 1985 c.291 §4; 1987 c.361 §7; 1999 c.492 §6; 2007 c.318 §19]

**517.870 Adjustment of bond or security of operator upon satisfactory completion of reclamation work.** Upon request of the operator, and when in the judgment of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries the reclamation has been completed in accordance with the reclamation plan, the operator shall be notified that the work has been found to be satisfactorily performed and is acceptable and the bond or security of the operator shall be adjusted accordingly. [1971 c.719 §11; 1999 c.492 §7; 2007 c.318 §20]

**517.880 Order for suspension of surface mining operation operating without required permit; enjoining operation upon failure of operator to comply; completion of reclamation by department.** (1) When the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries finds that an operator is conducting a surface mining operation for which an operating permit is required by ORS 517.702 to 517.989 or by rules adopted by the department, but has not been issued by the department, the department may issue an order to the operator to suspend the operation until an operating permit has been issued by the department for the surface mining operation or until the department is assured that the operator will comply with the requirement to obtain a permit.

(2) The department may issue an order to an operator to suspend operations if the operator has not complied with or is not complying with the operating permit, reclamation plan, this chapter or rules of the department. Failure to comply includes, but is not limited to, disturbing land within the permit boundary that has not been approved by the department for excavation, placement of debris or removal of vegetation.

(3) If the operator fails or refuses to comply with a suspension order, the Attorney General, at the request of the department, shall initiate any necessary legal proceeding to enjoin the surface mining operation and to provide for completion of the reclamation of the lands affected by the operation, including the restoration of buffers, setbacks or other areas not approved for disturbance. [1971 c.719 §12; 1985 c.292 §12; 1997 c.183 §3; 2007 c.318 §12]

**517.890 Review of final determination.** Any final determinations made by the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries in carrying out the provisions of ORS 517.702 to 517.989 and the rules and regulations adopted thereunder may be reviewed in the manner provided by the applicable provisions of ORS chapter 183. [1971 c.719 §13; 1985 c.292 §13; 1999 c.492 §8]

**517.900** [1971 c.719 §14; 1985 c.292 §14; repealed by 1999 c.492 §9 (517.901 enacted in lieu of 517.900)]

**517.901 Confidentiality of production records, mineral assessments and trade secrets.** Any production records, mineral assessments and trade secrets submitted by a mine operator or landowner to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall be confidential. [1999 c.492 §10 (enacted in lieu of 517.900)]

(Nonaggregate Mineral Surface Mines)

**517.905 Applicability of ORS 517.910 to 517.989 and 517.910 to 517.951.** (1) ORS 517.910 to 517.989 only apply to surface mines for nonaggregate minerals.

(2) ORS 517.910 to 517.951 do not apply to surface mines for nonaggregate minerals that are subject to the provisions for consolidated operating permits set forth in ORS 517.952 to 517.989. [1981 c.622 §15; 2013 c.371 §1]

**517.910 Definitions for ORS 517.910 to 517.989.** For the purposes of ORS 517.910 to 517.989:

(1) “Impact area” has the meaning given that term in ORS 215.298 (1).

(2) “Nonaggregate minerals” means coal and metal-bearing ores, including but not limited to ores that contain nickel, cobalt, lead, zinc, gold, molybdenum, uranium, silver, aluminum, chrome, copper or mercury.

(3) “Reclamation” means, notwithstanding ORS 517.750 (13), the employment in a surface mining operation of procedures reasonably designed to minimize, as much as practicable, the disruption from the surface mining operation or surface mining processing operation and to provide for the rehabilitation of any such surface resources through the use of plant cover, soil stability techniques, measures to protect the surface and subsurface water resources, including but not limited to domestic water use and agricultural water use, and other measures appropriate to the subsequent beneficial use of any land or water resource affected by a surface mining or processing operation.

(4) “Significant mineral resource site” has the meaning given that term in ORS 215.298 (1). [1981 c.622 §3; 1987 c.158 §113; 1987 c.693 §5; 1989 c.347 §14; 1999 c.353 §8; 2007 c.318 §21; 2013 c.371 §2; 2017 c.736 §6]

**517.915 Additional operating permit requirements for nonaggregate mineral mines; denial of permit if reclamation not possible.** (1) In addition to any other provision of law, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall not issue an operating permit until:

(a) The department has received a reclamation plan that contains but is not limited to:

(A) A description of the proposed mining operation;

(B) A description of what is to be mined;

(C) The present use of the land, the planned subsequent beneficial use of the land and a list of plant species to be established;

(D) The measures that will adequately conserve the quantity and quality of the affected aquifers;

(E) A description of any toxic or radioactive materials known to be present in the ore, spoil, tailings, overburden or any other material involved in the mining operation and their approximate concentrations;

(F) A description of how the materials described in subparagraph (E) of this paragraph will be handled during mining and reclamation;

(G) Environmental baseline information as may be required by the department; and

(H) The name and address of the landowner, the owner of the surface estate, the operator and any parent corporations of the operator.

(b) The department has received a performance bond as it may require.

(c) The department finds that reclamation is possible and that the reclamation plan as approved will achieve the reclamation of affected lands.

(2) If the department finds that reclamation cannot be accomplished, it shall not issue an operating permit.

(3) The department shall obtain, whenever possible, a list of plant species suitable for reseeding in the area pursuant to a reclamation plan and comments on the feasibility of permanent revegetation from the soil and water conservation district in which the mined land is situated.

(4) The department shall consult with affected public bodies, as defined in ORS 174.109, regarding the feasibility of reclamation, with particular attention to possible impacts on ground water aquifers. [1981 c.622 §§4,5,9; 1985 c.292 §18; 1987 c.361 §3; 2013 c.371 §3]

**517.917 Activation of project coordinating committee.** Upon receipt of an application for an operating permit subject to ORS 517.915 to mine a significant mineral resource site, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall activate a project coordinating committee as defined in ORS 517.952. The project coordinating committee shall be composed as provided in, and shall carry out the responsibilities as set forth in, ORS 517.965. [2017 c.736 §11]

**517.920 Permit application fees under ORS 517.910 to 517.989.** Each application for an operating permit under ORS 517.910 to 517.989 shall be accompanied by a fee sufficient to cover the costs of the State



Department of Geology and Mineral Industries in processing the application as determined by the department. [1981 c.622 §8; 1989 c.347 §15; 1989 c.461 §2; 1991 c.735 §30; 2013 c.371 §4]

**517.925 Time limit for action on permit application.** The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall have 120 days to act upon a completed permit application. [1981 c.622 §6]

**517.930 Department inspection.** Notwithstanding ORS 517.850, if the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries has reason to believe that the provisions of an operating permit are being violated or that a surface mining operation is being conducted without a valid operating permit, it may inspect such surface mining areas without prior notice. [1981 c.622 §7; 1991 c.735 §31; 2007 c.318 §22; 2013 c.371 §5]

**517.935** [1981 c.622 §12; repealed by 2013 c.371 §36]

**517.940** [1981 c.622 §11; 1985 c.291 §5; 2007 c.318 §23; repealed by 2013 c.371 §36]

**517.945** [1981 c.622 §13; repealed by 1999 c.353 §9]

**517.947** [1987 c.693 §§2,3; 1989 c.171 §68; repealed by 1991 c.735 §39]

**517.949** [1987 c.693 §4; repealed by 1991 c.735 §39]

**517.950** [1981 c.622 §10; 1985 c.292 §15; 1989 c.461 §3; 1995 c.79 §298; 2007 c.318 §24; repealed by 2013 c.371 §36]

**517.951 Legislative intent not to assume exclusive jurisdiction.** The Legislative Assembly declares that ORS 517.910 to 517.989 are not intended to provide the legal basis for assumption by the State of Oregon of exclusive jurisdiction over the environmental regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations described in section 503 of the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1253). [Formerly 517.955]

**Note:** 517.951 was added to and made a part of 517.702 to 517.989 by legislative action but was not added to any smaller series therein. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

## MINING OPERATIONS SUBJECT TO CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION PROCESS

**517.952 Definitions for ORS 517.952 to 517.989.** As used in ORS 517.952 to 517.989:

- (1) “Affected agency” includes permitting agencies, cooperating agencies and commenting agencies.
- (2) “Baseline data” means information gathered to characterize the natural and cultural environments of a mining operation site before a mining operation begins.
- (3) “Commenting agency” means any agency that makes recommendations to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries or to a permitting agency regarding permit conditions or whether to approve or deny a permit under the consolidated application process established under ORS 517.952 to 517.989.
- (4) “Consolidated application” means the single application required under ORS 517.971.
- (5) “Environmental evaluation” means an analysis prepared under ORS 517.979 to address specific impacts of the mining operation to allow affected agencies to develop permit conditions.
- (6) “Gravity separation” means the separation of mineral particles, with the aid of water or air, according to the differences in the specific gravities of the particles.
- (7) “Mining operation” means a surface or underground mine that processes, produces or reclaims metal ore using a method other than, or in addition to, gravity separation to process the ore.
- (8) “Mitigation” means the reduction of adverse effects of a proposed mining operation by considering, in the following order:
  - (a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
  - (b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
  - (c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating or restoring the affected environment;

(d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action by monitoring and taking appropriate corrective measures; or

(e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing comparable substitute resources or environments.

(9) "Permitting agency" means an agency that has a separate permitting authority for a mining operation.

(10) "Project coordinating committee" means the interagency governmental committee established in accordance with ORS 517.965.

(11) "Technical review team" means the interagency group established in accordance with ORS 517.967. [1991 c.735 §3; 2013 c.371 §6; 2017 c.736 §7]

**517.953 Policy.** Notwithstanding the policy set forth in ORS 517.760, the Legislative Assembly finds and declares that it is the policy of the State of Oregon to protect the environmental, scenic, recreational, social, archaeological and historic resources of this state from unacceptable adverse impacts that may result from mining operations, while permitting operations that comply with the provisions set forth in ORS 517.952 to 517.989 and ensure the protection of the public health, safety, welfare and the environment. [1991 c.735 §2; 2013 c.371 §7]

**517.954 Application of ORS 517.952 to 517.989.** ORS 517.952 to 517.989 apply only to mining operations as defined in ORS 517.952. ORS 517.952 to 517.989 do not apply to placer mining. [1991 c.735 §3a; 2013 c.371 §8]

**517.955** [1981 c.622 §16; renumbered 517.951 in 1991]

**517.956 Requirements for mining operations; rules.** Mining operations in Oregon shall comply with the following:

(1) Mining operations shall be undertaken in a manner that minimizes environmental damage through the use of the best available, practicable and necessary technology to ensure compliance with environmental standards.

(2) Protection measures for fish and wildlife shall be consistent with policies of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, including:

(a) Protective measures to maintain an objective of zero wildlife mortality. All chemical processing solutions and associated waste water shall be covered or contained to preclude access by wildlife or maintained in a condition that is not harmful to wildlife.

(b) On-site and off-site mitigation ensuring that there is no overall net loss of habitat value.

(c) No loss of existing critical habitat of any state or federally listed threatened or endangered species.

(d) Fish and wildlife mortality shall be reported in accordance with a monitoring and reporting plan approved by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

(e) The State Department of Fish and Wildlife shall establish by rule standards for review of a proposed mining operation for the purpose of developing conditions for fish and wildlife habitat protection that satisfy the terms of this section for inclusion in a consolidated permit by the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries.

(3) Surface reclamation of a mine site shall:

(a) Ensure protection of human health and safety, as well as that of livestock, fish and wildlife;

(b) Ensure environmental protection;

(c) Require certification to the operator, by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife and the State Department of Agriculture, that a self-sustaining ecosystem, comparable to undamaged ecosystems in the area, has been established in satisfaction of the operator's habitat restoration obligations; and

(d) Include backfilling or partial backfilling as determined on a case-by-case basis by the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries when necessary to achieve reclamation objectives that cannot be achieved through other mitigation activities. [1991 c.735 §4; 2003 c.14 §341; 2007 c.318 §25; 2013 c.371 §9]

**517.957 Department coordination of activities of affected agencies.** The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall coordinate the activities of the affected agencies related to the consolidated application process established under ORS 517.952 to 517.989. [1991 c.735 §5]

**517.958 Compliance with preapplication process; purpose.** Any person proposing to conduct a mining operation shall comply with the requirements for the preapplication process set forth in ORS 517.961 to 517.969. The purpose of such process shall be to identify significant issues to be addressed in the consolidated application process set forth in ORS 517.971 to 517.987. [1991 c.735 §6; 2013 c.371 §10]

**517.959 Public notice requirements for ORS 517.952 to 517.989; master list of interested parties; fees.** (1) Whenever required in ORS 517.952 to 517.989, public notice shall include information sufficient to inform the public of the proposed activity or event and shall include:

(a) Notification to all permitting and cooperating agencies.

(b) Notice by mail to each owner of property located within one-half mile of the perimeter of the proposed site of the mining operation. As used in this paragraph, “owner” means the owner of the title to real property or the contract purchaser of real property of record as shown on the last available complete tax assessment roll.

(c) Notice by mail to persons on the master list.

(d) Notice by mail to mineral claimants for claims located within one-half mile of the proposed mining operation or as otherwise required by rule of a permitting or cooperating agency.

(e) Notice by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the state and in a local newspaper of general circulation in the county or counties in which the proposed mining operation is located. Notice by publication shall be given at least once each week for two weeks immediately preceding the action.

(2) The notice provided pursuant to this section shall satisfy any notice requirement of an individual permitting or cooperating agency related to a permit included in the consolidated application process established under ORS 517.952 to 517.989.

(3) As used in this section, “master list” means a consolidated list of all interested parties compiled by the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and each permitting and cooperating agency and maintained by the department. Any person may request in writing that the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries add the person’s name to the agency master list. The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may establish a procedure for establishing and maintaining an agency master list, and the governing board of the department may establish a fee to be paid by a person requesting to be added to the master list. The fee shall be sufficient to defray the department’s costs of mailing notices to persons on the master list and maintaining the master list. [1991 c.735 §7; 2013 c.371 §11]

**517.960** [1989 c.347 §2; renumbered 517.702 in 1991]

**517.961 Notice of intent to submit application; posting of notice.** A prospective applicant for a mining operation permit shall file with the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries a notice of intent to submit an application and post copies of the notice along the perimeter of the location of the proposed operation. The posting shall be sufficient to inform the public of the intended action and a legal description of the proposed mining operation location and shall comply with requirements adopted by rule by the governing board of the department. [1991 c.735 §8; 2013 c.371 §12]

**517.962** [1989 c.347 §3; renumbered 517.705 in 1991]

**517.963 Department duties upon receipt of notice of intent.** Upon receipt of a notice of intent under ORS 517.961, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall:

(1) Provide notice as required under ORS 517.959. The notice shall be sufficient to inform the public of the nature, size and location of the proposed mining operation.

(2) Activate a project coordinating committee for the proposed mining operation and coordinate the participation of federal agencies, affected agencies, local government agencies and the prospective applicant in the activities of the project coordinating committee.

(3) Activate a technical review team for the proposed mining operation.

(4) Identify to the prospective applicant all permitting and cooperating agencies that will be participating in the consolidated application process. [1991 c.735 §9; 2013 c.371 §13]

**517.964** [1989 c.347 §4; renumbered 517.710 in 1991]

**517.965 Project coordinating committee.** (1)(a) A project coordinating committee shall be composed of representatives from the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, all permitting and cooperating agencies, local government agencies and affected federal agencies. Each permitting and cooperating agency shall designate an appropriate staff member to serve on the committee. The project coordinating committee shall share information and coordinate county, state and federal permitting requirements in order to avoid contradictory requirements, facilitate the exchange of ideas, optimize communication and avoid duplicative effort.

(b) If a mining operation is proposed on federal land, the project coordinating committee shall work with the affected federal agency in accordance with a memorandum of agreement established by the department and the federal agency to facilitate the state and federal application process and to coordinate the two processes to the fullest extent possible.

(2)(a) For a proposed mining operation that is a significant mineral resource site, if the owner or lessee of private property within the impact area of the proposed mining operation identifies a conflict between the proposed mining operation and the agricultural activities conducted on the private property within the impact area, the project coordinating committee shall analyze and address the identified conflict. In analyzing and addressing the identified conflict, the project coordinating committee:

(A) Shall consider compliance with federal, state or local standards for air quality, noise, water quality or other environmental considerations that are applicable to the identified conflict to be sufficient to resolve the conflict; and

(B) If there are not applicable federal, state or local standards as provided for in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, may suggest to the department permit conditions for avoiding or reducing the identified conflict.

(b) The department shall avoid or minimize the conflicts identified by the project coordinating committee under this subsection through the imposition of one or more permit conditions. The permit conditions imposed by the department pursuant to this paragraph may include, but are not limited to:

(A) A permit condition suggested by the project coordinating committee;

(B) A requirement that the operator fulfill the terms of a written agreement to compensate one or more owners or lessees of private property located within the impact area for loss of crops or reduced agricultural production or use of the land; or

(C) Other reasonable and practicable measures to avoid or minimize the conflicts, as determined by the department.

(c) For purposes of this subsection, the department shall determine the impact area of the proposed mining operation.

(3) In carrying out its responsibilities, the project coordinating committee shall include opportunities for public participation. [1991 c.735 §10; 2013 c.371 §14; 2017 c.736 §8]

**517.966** [1989 c.347 §8; renumbered 517.715 in 1991]

**517.967 Technical review team.** (1) A technical review team shall be composed of representatives from the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and each permitting agency and cooperating agency. The technical review team shall:

(a) Establish methodology guidelines to be followed in the collection of baseline data;

(b) Coordinate with the applicant the use of baseline data collection methodologies as approved by the permitting and cooperating agencies; and

(c) Determine whether the mining operation as proposed in the consolidated application complies with ORS 517.956 and any other applicable requirements for a permit listed under ORS 517.971.

(2) Each permitting agency and cooperating agency shall designate an appropriate staff member to serve on the technical review team. [1991 c.735 §11; 2013 c.371 §15]

**517.968** [1989 c.347 §6; renumbered 517.720 in 1991]

**517.969 Collection of baseline data; public informational meetings; collection methodology.** (1) Upon receipt of notice from a prospective applicant that the prospective applicant is ready to begin collecting baseline data, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall:

(a) Provide notice in accordance with ORS 517.959 that the prospective applicant intends to begin baseline data collection and the location where additional background information may be obtained or reviewed.

(b) Within 30 days after receiving the notice from the applicant, conduct two public information meetings. One public meeting shall be conducted in the population center closest to the site of the proposed mining operation and one public meeting shall be conducted in a major population center for the state, as determined by State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries.

(c) Receive written comments from the public and affected agencies for 45 days after receiving notice under this subsection.

(2) The purpose of the public informational meetings and public comment period under subsection (1) of this section shall be to:

(a) Identify the issues raised by the proposed mining operation;

(b) Receive information from the public that the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and the permitting and cooperating agencies may need to know in order to evaluate the application; and

(c) Determine the data that should be collected during the baseline data collection phase of the consolidated application process to address the issues identified.

(3) Upon receipt of notice under subsection (1) of this section, the technical review team activated under ORS 517.963 shall determine the specific methodologies to be applied by the applicant in collecting baseline data.

(4) The applicant shall collect data according to the methodology established by the permitting and cooperating agencies through the technical review team. The data collected shall be verified by the appropriate agency in accordance with procedures adopted by the agency. [1991 c.735 §12; 2013 c.371 §16]

**517.970** [1989 c.347 §5; renumbered 517.725 in 1991]

**517.971 Consolidated application.** Each applicant for a permit to operate a mining operation shall submit a consolidated application to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. The department and the permitting and cooperating agencies shall not begin deliberating on whether to issue a permit until the department receives an application fee and a complete consolidated application that includes but is not limited to:

(1) Name and location of the proposed facility.

(2) Name, mailing address and phone number of the applicant and a registered agent for the applicant.

(3) The legal structure of the applicant as filed in the business registry with the Secretary of State and the legal residence of the applicant.

(4) Mineral and surface ownership status of the proposed facility.

(5) Baseline data, including but not limited to environmental, socioeconomic, historical, archaeological conditions, land use designations and special use designations in the area of the state in which the proposed mining operation is located.

(6) Appropriate maps, aerial photos, cross sections, plans and documentation.

(7) A proposed:

(a) Mine plan;

(b) Processing plan;

(c) Water budget;

(d) Fish and wildlife protection and mitigation plan;

(e) Operational monitoring and reporting plan;

(f) Reclamation and closure plan;

(g) Plan for controlling water runoff and run on;

(h) Operating plan;

(i) Solid and hazardous waste management plan;

(j) Plan for transporting and storing toxic chemicals;

(k) Employee training plan as required by agency rule;

(L) Seasonal or short term closure plan;

(m) Spill prevention and credible accident contingency plan;

(n) Post-closure monitoring and reporting plan; and

(o) Identification of special natural areas, including but not limited to areas designated as areas of critical environmental concern, research natural areas, outstanding natural areas and areas designated by the Oregon Natural Areas Plan, as defined in state rules and federal regulations.

(8) All information required by the permitting agencies to determine whether to issue or deny the following permits as applicable to the proposed operation:

- (a) Surface mining operating permits required under ORS 517.790 and 517.915;
- (b) Fill and removal permits required under ORS 196.600 to 196.921;
- (c) Permits to appropriate surface water or ground water under ORS 537.130 and 537.615, to store water under ORS 537.400 and impoundment structure approval under ORS 540.449;
- (d) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit under ORS 468B.050;
- (e) Water pollution control facility permit under ORS 468B.050;
- (f) Air contaminant discharge permit under ORS 468A.040 to 468A.060;
- (g) Solid waste disposal permit under ORS 459.205;
- (h) Permit for use of power driven machinery on forestland under ORS 477.625;
- (i) Permit for placing explosives or harmful substances in waters of the state under ORS 509.140;
- (j) Hazardous waste storage permit under ORS 466.005 to 466.385;
- (k) Local land use permits; and
- (L) Any other state permit required for the mining operation.

(9) All other information required by the department, a permitting agency, a cooperating agency or the technical review team. [1991 c.735 §13; 1995 c.605 §3; 2009 c.217 §12; 2013 c.371 §17; 2019 c.390 §21]

**Note:** The amendments to 517.971 by section 21, chapter 390, Oregon Laws 2019, become operative July 1, 2020. See section 28, chapter 390, Oregon Laws 2019. The text that is operative until July 1, 2020, is set forth for the user's convenience.

**517.971.** Each applicant for a permit to operate a mining operation shall submit a consolidated application to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. The department and the permitting and cooperating agencies shall not begin deliberating on whether to issue a permit until the department receives an application fee and a complete consolidated application that includes but is not limited to:

- (1) Name and location of the proposed facility.
- (2) Name, mailing address and phone number of the applicant and a registered agent for the applicant.
- (3) The legal structure of the applicant as filed in the business registry with the Secretary of State and the legal residence of the applicant.
- (4) Mineral and surface ownership status of the proposed facility.
- (5) Baseline data, including but not limited to environmental, socioeconomic, historical, archaeological conditions, land use designations and special use designations in the area of the state in which the proposed mining operation is located.
- (6) Appropriate maps, aerial photos, cross sections, plans and documentation.
- (7) A proposed:
  - (a) Mine plan;
  - (b) Processing plan;
  - (c) Water budget;
  - (d) Fish and wildlife protection and mitigation plan;
  - (e) Operational monitoring and reporting plan;
  - (f) Reclamation and closure plan;
  - (g) Plan for controlling water runoff and run on;
  - (h) Operating plan;
  - (i) Solid and hazardous waste management plan;
  - (j) Plan for transporting and storing toxic chemicals;
  - (k) Employee training plan as required by agency rule;
  - (L) Seasonal or short term closure plan;
  - (m) Spill prevention and credible accident contingency plan;
  - (n) Post-closure monitoring and reporting plan; and
  - (o) Identification of special natural areas, including but not limited to areas designated as areas of critical environmental concern, research natural areas, outstanding natural areas and areas designated by the Oregon

Natural Areas Plan, as defined in state rules and federal regulations.

(8) All information required by the permitting agencies to determine whether to issue or deny the following permits as applicable to the proposed operation:

- (a) Surface mining operating permits required under ORS 517.790 and 517.915;
- (b) Fill and removal permits required under ORS 196.600 to 196.921;
- (c) Permits to appropriate surface water or ground water under ORS 537.130 and 537.615, to store water under ORS 537.400 and impoundment structure approval under ORS 540.350 to 540.390;
- (d) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit under ORS 468B.050;
- (e) Water pollution control facility permit under ORS 468B.050;
- (f) Air contaminant discharge permit under ORS 468A.040 to 468A.060;
- (g) Solid waste disposal permit under ORS 459.205;
- (h) Permit for use of power driven machinery on forestland under ORS 477.625;
- (i) Permit for placing explosives or harmful substances in waters of the state under ORS 509.140;
- (j) Hazardous waste storage permit under ORS 466.005 to 466.385;
- (k) Local land use permits; and
- (L) Any other state permit required for the mining operation.

(9) All other information required by the department, a permitting agency, a cooperating agency or the technical review team.

**517.972** [1989 c.347 §7; renumbered 517.730 in 1991]

**517.973 Fees; payment of expenses of department and permitting and cooperating agencies.** (1) In addition to any permit fee required by any other permitting agency, each notice of intent to submit a consolidated application under ORS 517.961 shall be accompanied by an initial fee established by the State Geologist in an amount not to exceed \$1,260.

(2)(a) Annually on the anniversary date of the issuance of each such operating permit, each holder of an operating permit shall pay to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries a renewal fee established by the State Geologist in an amount not less than \$2,500.

(b) In addition to the fee prescribed in paragraph (a) of this subsection, the department may charge an additional amount not to exceed \$1,200 for inspections made at sites:

- (A) Where surface mining was conducted without the permit required by ORS 517.790;
- (B) Where surface mining has been abandoned; or
- (C) Where surface mining was conducted in an area not described in the surface mining permit.

(3) Subject to the provisions of subsection (5) of this section, the prospective applicant or applicant shall pay all expenses incurred by the department and the permitting and cooperating agencies related to the consolidated application process under ORS 517.952 to 517.989. These expenses may include legal expenses, expenses incurred in processing and evaluating the consolidated application, issuing a permit or final order and expenses of hiring a third party contractor under ORS 517.979 and 517.980.

(4) If the costs exceed the fee, the prospective applicant or applicant shall pay any excess costs shown in an itemized statement prepared by the department. In no event shall the department and permitting and cooperating agencies incur evaluation expenses in excess of 110 percent of the fee initially paid unless the department provides prior notification to the prospective applicant or applicant and a detailed projected budget the department believes necessary to complete the process or a portion of the process under ORS 517.952 to 517.989. If the costs are less than the fee paid, the excess shall be refunded to the prospective applicant or applicant.

(5) All expenses incurred by the department and the permitting and cooperating agencies under ORS 517.952 to 517.989 that are charged to or allocated to the fee paid by a prospective applicant or an applicant shall be necessary, just and reasonable. Upon request, the department shall provide a detailed justification for all charges to the prospective applicant or applicant. [1991 c.735 §13a; 2013 c.371 §18]

**517.974** [1989 c.347 §9; renumbered 517.735 in 1991]

**517.975 Distribution of completed consolidated application; notice of receipt of application.** Upon receipt of a completed consolidated application, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall:

(1) Provide copies of the application to each affected local government, permitting agency, cooperating agency or federal agency.

(2) Provide notice of the receipt of the consolidated application in accordance with ORS 517.959. The notice shall include information about the opportunity for submitting written comments on the application and about the public hearing conducted as required under ORS 517.977. [1991 c.735 §14]

**517.976** [1989 c.347 §16; renumbered 517.740 in 1991]

**517.977 Preparation of draft permits; public hearing; determination of completeness of consolidated application.** (1) When all members of the technical review team concur that the permitting agencies and the cooperating agencies are ready to begin preparing draft permits, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall conduct a public hearing and accept written comments on whether the information contained in the consolidated application is complete and sufficient to allow the permitting agencies to determine whether to issue a permit. The date and location of the public hearing and the period allowed for written comment shall be established by the department. Notice of the public hearing and comment period shall be given in accordance with ORS 517.959.

(2) At the conclusion of the public hearing and comment period under subsection (1) of this section and within 90 days after the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries receives a consolidated application for a mining operation, the department, in conjunction with all permitting and cooperating agencies, shall make a determination of whether the application is complete. On the basis of the determination the department shall either:

(a) If the permitting and cooperating agencies determine that the consolidated application is complete, issue a notice to proceed with the permitting process and the preparation of draft permits; or

(b) If the permitting and cooperating agencies determine that additional information is necessary, notify the applicant of the additional information that is required.

(3) If the permitting and cooperating agencies do not require the applicant to provide additional information as suggested at the public hearing or comment period under subsection (1) of this section, the agencies shall prepare a written response explaining why the additional information is not being requested from the applicant.

(4) Upon receipt of any additional information requested, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall accept public comments related to the additional information for a period of two weeks. Except as provided in ORS 517.978, the department shall not conduct additional public hearings. [1991 c.735 §15; 2013 c.371 §19]

**517.978 Review of application; additional information.** (1) After the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries issues a notice to proceed, the consolidated application shall be considered complete unless:

(a) New information is available that could not have been presented at the time of the completeness hearing; or

(b) Additional information is necessary to allow the permitting or cooperating agencies to make a determination regarding whether to issue or deny a permit or to issue the permit with conditions attached.

(2) The permitting and cooperating agencies may continue to review an application while in the process of requesting additional information. However, the department shall conduct an additional public hearing under ORS 517.977 if the agencies determine that additional information is significant to the issuance or denial of a permit. [1991 c.735 §16]

**517.979 Environmental evaluation; review of baseline data; payment of costs of third party contractor.** (1) The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall direct staff or shall hire a third party contractor to:

(a) Prepare an environmental evaluation;

(b) Review baseline data submitted by the applicant; and

(c) Review application material if a permitting agency or a cooperating agency lacks the expertise.

(2) The applicant shall pay costs of hiring a third party contractor. If the applicant shows cause why a particular third party contractor should not be allowed to perform a function under subsection (1) of this section, the department shall hire an alternate contractor.

(3) The contents of the environmental evaluation under subsection (1) of this section shall include:



(a) An analysis of the reasonably foreseeable impacts of an activity including catastrophic consequences, even if the probability of occurrence is low, if the analysis is supported by credible scientific evidence and is not based on pure conjecture.

(b) An assessment of the total cumulative impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of an action when added with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of the agency or persons that undertake the other action, or whether the actions are on private, state or federal land. To the extent possible, the department shall enter into a memorandum of agreement with federal agencies to ensure that information required by the state in evaluating the cumulative impact of a proposed mining operation may be used by the applicant to satisfy federal requirements for such an assessment.

(c) A review and analysis of alternatives analyzed by the applicant or a contractor hired by the applicant that:

(A) Rigorously explores and objectively evaluates all reasonable alternatives and briefly discusses alternatives that were eliminated and the reasons the alternatives were eliminated;

(B) Treats each alternative, including the proposed action, in detail so that the permitting agencies, cooperating agencies and the public may evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives; and

(C) Identifies all alternatives within the authority of each permitting or cooperating agency.

(4) Upon completion of the environmental evaluation, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall provide notice in accordance with ORS 517.959. The notice shall state that the environmental evaluation is complete and that the persons may respond with written comments for a period of two weeks after the notice is given. [1991 c.735 §17; 2013 c.371 §20]

**517.980 Socioeconomic impact analysis.** Concurrent with the development of the environmental evaluation, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall direct staff or hire a third party contractor to prepare a socioeconomic impact analysis for the use of the applicant, local government and affected agencies. [1991 c.735 §18]

**517.981 Draft permit and permit conditions; denial of permit; time limits; public hearing on draft permit.** (1) Within 225 days after receiving the completed consolidated application and the environmental evaluation conducted under ORS 517.979, each permitting agency shall provide its draft permit and permit conditions or its denial document to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. If a permitting agency includes in its draft permit a condition that is inconsistent with the environmental evaluation conducted pursuant to ORS 517.979, the agency shall include with its draft permit a written explanation of the condition setting forth the findings of the agency that support the condition. The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall assure that the conditions imposed on the permits by the cooperating agencies do not conflict. If the department finds a conflict exists, the technical review team shall resolve the conflict.

(2) Within 15 days after receiving all draft permits and the completion of its draft operating permit, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall issue notice of an opportunity for public comment and a consolidated public hearing on all draft permits. The public hearing shall occur not sooner than 45 days after the department issues the notice. The notice shall be issued in accordance with ORS 517.959. [1991 c.735 §19]

**517.982 Final permits; permit conditions submitted by cooperating agencies.** (1) Based on information received at the consolidated public hearing, from persons submitting written comments, commenting agencies and the review of the affected agencies, each permitting agency shall, within 45 days after the consolidated public hearing under ORS 517.981 or within the time period required by any applicable federal law, whichever is sooner, approve, deny or modify the agency's permit with conditions necessary to ensure that the mining operation allowed under a permit complies with the standards and requirements applicable to the permit.

(2) Each cooperating agency shall:

(a) Develop permit conditions within the expertise and authority of the cooperating agency that are reasonable and designed to avoid or minimize the adverse effect; and

(b) Submit the permit conditions to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to be included as conditions on the department's permit.

(3) The department may not issue a permit until each cooperating agency has submitted a written concurrence with the terms and conditions of the permit pertaining to the statutory responsibility of each cooperating agency or 60 days after the consolidated public hearing, whichever is earlier.

(4) Upon completion of the permits, the department shall issue a notice in accordance with ORS 517.959 to notify interested persons that the final permits are issued. [1991 c.735 §20; 2013 c.371 §21; 2017 c.736 §9]

**517.983 Consolidated contested case hearing; judicial review; stay of permit.** (1) The applicant or any person who appeared before a permitting agency at the consolidated public hearing under ORS 517.981, either orally or in writing, regarding a permit granted or denied by the permitting agency may file with the State Geologist a written request for a consolidated contested case hearing. The request shall be filed within 30 days after the date the permit was granted or denied.

(2) Upon receipt of a request under subsection (1) of this section, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall schedule a consolidated contested case hearing which shall be held not less than 60 days or more than 75 days after the notice of permit issuance under ORS 517.982. The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions applicable to contested case proceedings under ORS chapter 183. Any permit granted by a permitting agency shall be suspended until completion of the administrative hearings process.

(3) Hearings under this section shall be conducted by an administrative law judge assigned from the Office of Administrative Hearings established under ORS 183.605.

(4) The administrative law judge shall prepare a proposed order for each contested permit. A party may file written exceptions to the proposed order with the permitting agency. If the permitting agency determines that additional information may be included in the record, the agency shall remand the order to the appropriate administrative law judge for further consideration. After receiving exceptions and hearing argument on the exceptions, the governing body or person within the permitting agency responsible for making a final decision on a permit may adopt the proposed order or issue a new order.

(5) Jurisdiction for judicial review of a permitting agency's issuance or denial of a permit is conferred upon the Supreme Court. Proceedings for review shall be instituted by filing a petition in the Supreme Court. The petition shall be filed within 60 days following the date the permit is issued or denied. If the permit with prescribed conditions is approved, the filing of the petition for review shall stay the permit during the pendency of judicial review for a period of up to six months from the date the petition for review is filed. The Supreme Court may extend the stay beyond the six-month period upon written request and a showing by the petitioner that the activities under the permit could result in irreparable harm to the site. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the review by the Supreme Court shall be as provided in ORS 183.482. The Supreme Court shall give priority on its docket to such a petition for review.

(6) When only the applicant files a petition for judicial review, the six-month stay imposed under subsection (5) of this section may be removed by the permitting agency upon written request within 60 days after the filing of the petition and a showing by the applicant to support a finding by the permitting agency that proceeding with any or all activities under the permit will not result in irreparable harm to the site. In making such findings the permitting agency may require an additional bond or alternative security to be filed with the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries as provided in ORS 517.987. The bond shall be in an amount the permitting agency determines necessary to assure complete restoration of the site if the petitioner elects not to complete the project following judicial review. Agency denial of the request to remove the stay is subject to review by the Supreme Court under such rules as the Supreme Court may establish. [1991 c.735 §21; 1999 c.849 §§104a,104c; 2003 c.75 §44]

**517.984 Modification of permit; project coordinating committee.** (1) The operator, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, any other permitting agency or a cooperating agency may request modification of a permit issued under the process established under ORS 517.952 to 517.989.

(2) If a permitting agency is requested to make a permit modification that the permitting agency or a cooperating agency finds is a significant permit modification under the provisions of ORS 517.952 to 517.989, the agency shall notify the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. The department shall coordinate the organization of a project coordinating committee. The project coordinating committee shall review the proposed modification and determine those portions of ORS 517.952 to 517.989 with which the applicant must comply. The decision of the project review committee shall be:

(a) Limited to those portions of the mining operation to be modified; and

(b) Consistent with public participation as set forth in ORS 517.952 to 517.989. [1991 c.735 §22; 2007 c.318 §26; 2013 c.371 §22]

**517.985 Rulemaking.** In accordance with applicable provisions of ORS chapter 183, the governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall adopt rules necessary to implement the provisions of ORS 517.952 to 517.989. The rules shall include but need not be limited to:

- (1) The information required to be submitted in a notice of intent;
- (2) The fee that the department may collect from a person requesting inclusion on the master list under ORS 517.959; and
- (3) The form and content of the consolidated application. [1991 c.735 §23]

**517.986 Time limit for final action on permit subject to consolidated application process.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and any other permitting agency shall take final action to issue or deny a permit subject to the consolidated application process set forth in ORS 517.952 to 517.989 within one year after issuance of a notice to proceed under ORS 517.977. However, with the concurrence of the applicant, the processing of the application may be suspended for a period of time to allow the applicant to resolve issues having a bearing on, or necessary to any permitting agency's decision or the department's decision on whether to issue or deny a permit. [1991 c.735 §24]

**517.987 Reclamation bond or security; annual assessment of cost of reclamation; lien; release of security; post-reclamation security.** (1) At the time of submitting a consolidated application under ORS 517.971, the applicant shall estimate the total cost of reclamation consistent with the standards imposed under ORS 517.702 to 517.989. Using the reclamation estimate and a credible accident analysis as a guide, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall make an initial determination as to the amount of the reclamation bond necessary to protect human health and the environment. The department shall distribute a bond proposal to all permitting and cooperating agencies. The amount of the bond that the department may require to cover the actual cost of reclamation shall not be limited.

(2) The reclamation bond or alternative security acceptable to the department shall be posted before the start of mining operations. The bond shall be issued by a bonding company licensed to operate in Oregon. A mining operation may not satisfy the requirements for a bond through self-insurance.

(3) The department shall assess annually the overall cost of reclamation. If changes in the operation or modifications to a permit cause the cost of reclamation to exceed the amount of the reclamation bond currently held by the state, the operator shall post an additional bond for the difference. All reclamation calculations shall be approved by the department. Incremental surety increases shall be provided for, with the level of surety being consistent with the degree and forms of surface disturbance anticipated within a time period specified by the department. When the actual surface area to be disturbed approaches the level expected by the department, the operator shall notify the department sufficiently in advance of reaching the acreage limit specified to allow for a review of surety requirements and posting of additional surety by the operator prior to exceeding the acreage limit set by the department.

(4) If reclamation costs will exceed the posted bond and the operator does not increase the bond amount, the department and other permitting agencies shall suspend all permits until the operator posts the additional bond security.

(5) The department may seek a lien against the assets of the operator to cover the cost of reclamation if the bond posted is insufficient. The amount of the lien shall be the amount of the costs incurred by the department to complete reclamation. All current operating permits of the operator shall be suspended and the department shall deny immediately all pending applications of the operator to conduct mining operations.

(6)(a) The operator shall submit to the department a written request for the release of its reclamation bond. If the operator has conducted concurrent reclamation, the operator shall submit an application for bond reduction which estimates the percentage of reclamation done to date and the corresponding percentage of reclamation funds that the operator believes should be returned. A bond release or reduction request shall state in unambiguous terms all measures taken to reclaim the site and any problem or potential problems that may inhibit reclamation in accordance with permit requirements.

(b) The department shall distribute the request to each permitting or cooperating agency, to members of the public who participated in the consolidated application under ORS 517.952 to 517.989, and to any person who requests notification. In addition, the department shall publish a notice as provided in ORS 517.959 announcing receipt of a request for bond release or bond reduction.

(c) No sooner than 60 days after distributing the request and providing notice of the receipt of the request, the department shall conduct an informal public hearing to determine whether to allow the bond release or bond reduction.

(7) The department may require security or an annuity for post-reclamation monitoring and care to be paid before the final bond release. The security or annuity shall be sufficient to cover long-term site care and monitoring needs. The department shall determine the amount of the proposed security or annuity and distribute a proposal to all permitting and cooperating agencies. [1991 c.735 §24a; 2007 c.318 §27]

**517.988 Permit conditions by State Department of Fish and Wildlife; violations of State Department of Fish and Wildlife conditions.** (1) The State Department of Fish and Wildlife shall develop conditions for the protection of fish and wildlife resources that shall be included in any permit issued by the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries under the process established under ORS 517.952 to 517.989.

(2) The State Department of Fish and Wildlife shall have the right of ingress and egress to and from a mine operating under a permit that includes conditions imposed pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, doing no unnecessary injury to the property of the mine operator, to determine whether the operator is complying with such conditions. If the State Department of Fish and Wildlife determines that a violation has occurred, the State Department of Fish and Wildlife shall inform the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries of the violation and the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries shall cooperate with the State Department of Fish and Wildlife to take appropriate enforcement action. [1991 c.735 §24b; 2013 c.371 §23]

**Note:** 517.988 was enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but was not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 517 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

**517.989 Rules applicable to consolidated application.** (1) Except as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section, the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and all permitting and commenting agencies shall review and take action on a consolidated application in accordance with rules in effect at the time the notice of intent to submit an application is filed under ORS 517.961.

(2) Subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to a consolidated application if:

(a) An applicant is responsible for unreasonable delays in the processing of the application or fails to make a good faith effort to comply with all requirements for issuance of the permit;

(b) Application of a statute or rule is required under federal law or is a requirement for the state to maintain approval of or delegation of administration of a federal program; or

(c) The department, or a permitting agency or commenting agency, finds that application of a rule is necessary to protect the public from a serious threat to human health or safety. [1995 c.503 §2; 2013 c.371 §24]

## PENALTIES

**517.990 Criminal penalties.** (1) A person who conducts a surface mining operation without a valid operating permit as required by ORS 517.750 to 517.901 commits a Class A violation.

(2) Subject to ORS 153.022, violation of any provision of ORS 517.750 to 517.901, or any rules promulgated pursuant thereto, or of any conditions of an operating permit is a Class A violation.

(3) Subject to ORS 153.022, violation of ORS 517.910 to 517.989, or any rules promulgated pursuant thereto, or of any conditions of an operating permit for a nonaggregate surface mining operation is punishable, upon conviction, by a fine of not more than \$10,000.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, a person who conducts a nonaggregate surface mining operation without a valid operating permit as required by ORS 517.910 to 517.989 shall be punished, upon conviction, by a fine of not more than \$10,000.

(5) A person commits a violation subject to a fine of not more than \$10,000 if the person knowingly or recklessly causes substantial harm to human health or the environment while:

(a) Conducting a surface mining operation without a valid operating permit as required by ORS 517.750 to 517.901; or

(b) Violating an operating permit, a reclamation plan, a provision of this chapter or any rule adopted by the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to carry out the provisions of this chapter.

(6) For purposes of this section, “substantial harm to human health or the environment” means:

(a) Physical injury, as defined in ORS 161.015, or risk of serious physical injury, as defined in ORS 161.015, to humans; or

(b) Substantial damage to wildlife, plants, aquatic and marine life, habitat or stream buffers. [Amended by 1953 c.188 §2; subsection (3) enacted as 1957 c.580 §11; 1971 c.743 §398; subsection (4) enacted as 1971 c.719 §18; subsections (5) and (6) enacted as 1981 c.622 §14; 1985 c.292 §1; 1987 c.260 §4; 1993 c.742 §115; 1999 c.1051 §196; 2007 c.318 §13; 2013 c.371 §25]

**517.992 Civil penalties; rules.** (1) In addition to any other sanction authorized by law, the governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may impose a civil penalty of not less than \$200 per day and not more than \$50,000 per day for any violation of ORS 517.952 to 517.989, of any rules adopted under those provisions, of any orders issued under those provisions or of any conditions of a permit issued under those provisions. A penalty may be imposed under this subsection without regard to whether the violation occurs on property covered by a permit issued under ORS 517.952 to 517.989.

(2)(a) In addition to any other sanction authorized by law, and subject to the limitations of paragraph (b) of this subsection, the governing board of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries may impose a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 per day for any violation of ORS 517.702 to 517.740, 517.750 to 517.901 and 517.905 to 517.951, of any rules adopted under those provisions, of any orders issued under those provisions or of any conditions of a permit issued under those provisions.

(b) A penalty may be imposed under this subsection only if a landowner or operator fails to complete erosion stabilization as required by ORS 517.775 or board rules adopted to implement that section, if the operator has failed to comply with an order issued under ORS 517.860 or 517.880, if the operation is being conducted in violation of conditions imposed on an operating permit or reclamation plan pursuant to ORS 517.835 or if the operation is being conducted:

(A) Without a permit;

(B) Outside the permit boundary; or

(C) Outside a permit condition regarding boundaries, setbacks, buffers or the placement of surface mining refuse.

(3) Civil penalties under this section shall be imposed in the manner provided by ORS 183.745.

(4) Failure to pay a civil penalty that has become final under this section shall be grounds for revocation of any permit issued under ORS 517.702 to 517.989 to the person against whom the penalty has been assessed.

(5) Any civil penalty received by the State Treasurer under this section shall be deposited in the General Fund to the credit of the Geology and Mineral Industries Account and is continuously appropriated to the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to the extent necessary for the administration and enforcement of the laws, rules and orders under which the penalty was assessed.

(6) A reclamation fund shall be established into which funds not used as described in subsection (5) of this section shall be deposited. This money shall be used by the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries for the purpose of the reclamation of abandoned mine and drill sites.

(7) When a single incident violates statutes, rules, board orders or permit conditions administered by more than one agency, the department shall coordinate with the other agencies having civil penalty authority before imposing a civil penalty.

(8) In implementing this section, the department shall adopt rules that provide civil penalties that are commensurate with the severity of violations.

(9) A civil penalty may be imposed against the board of directors and high managerial agents of a corporation if those persons engage in, authorize, solicit, request, command or knowingly tolerate the conduct for which the penalty is to be imposed. As used in this subsection, “agent” and “high managerial agent” have the meanings given those terms in ORS 161.170. [1991 c.735 §24c; 1993 c.341 §1; 1997 c.183 §4; 2001 c.262 §1; 2003 c.470 §3; 2007 c.318 §14; 2013 c.371 §26]

CHAPTERS 518 AND 519 [Reserved for expansion]\_\_\_\_\_