

Citizens Coal Council
Office of Surface Mining (OSM) – Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Merger
Talking Points

- **The burial of the OSM in the BLM is illegal.** It is forbidden per Section 201 of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA).
- Inherent conflicts exist between the OSM’s regulatory and BLM’s coal development duties and their cross pollination is expressly forbidden by SMCRA.
- The Secretary does not have the executive power to bury the OSM within the BLM without Congressional action.
- There is broad opposition to this proposal: from environmental citizen groups in the coal bearing regions, and from industry itself.
- The burying of OSM in BLM will cause regulatory chaos and further isolate OSM and make it more difficult for citizens to oversee the federal government’s mining and reclamation responsibilities.
- The mere suggestion of this burial is indicative of the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) lack of interest in and understanding of OSM’s responsibilities to communities, the environment, and coal-impacted citizens.
- The Secretary, instead of trying to destroy the OSM, should embrace his responsibility under SMCRA to protect coal-impacted citizens and their environment and therefore argue for fully funding OSM to perform their “needed and mandated” oversight.
- One rationale for burying OSM in BLM is to produce cost savings, but Interior could find more savings by improving BLM’s own incompetence in the collection of royalties, fees and fines.
- The Secretary’s proposal to alter SMCRA’s 2006 abandoned mine lands (AML) program and fee collection system has major implications and would make it possible for Congress and the Administration to steal AML funds that are dedicated to restoring the health of the waters damaged by the coal industry.