



## Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

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**The Secretary**

717-787-2814

To Governor Tom Ridge, members of the General Assembly,  
Environmental Quality Board and Citizens Advisory Council:

I am pleased to provide you with this copy of DEP's Supplemental Report on the Effects of Underground Coal Mining. The supplement was prepared to fulfill DEP's commitment to address unresolved issues from the 1999 report and to provide additional information on damage claims that originated during the 1993-1998 study period.

Under the 1994 amendments to the Commonwealth's Bituminous Mine Subsidence and Land Conservation Act (Act 54), mine operators are responsible for repairing or compensating for damages to certain structures and water supplies caused by underground mining. The act requires DEP to assess the effects of underground mining every five years. The 1999 report was the first report ever completed on damages caused by deep mine operations, and we are appreciative of the feedback we received regarding that report.

In preparing the supplemental report, DEP again attempted to contact property owners in the study area to develop more information on damage claims that were pending. Through additional investigations and surveys, we are now able to provide a more complete picture of the impacts of underground mining and the resolution rates for damages.

Using this additional data, DEP was able to confirm that damage from underground mining occurred on 173 more properties in the study area than documented in 1999, but the percentage of properties with damage reported decreased by 11 percent overall (from 59 to 48 percent). DEP also found that mine operators are generally complying with their responsibilities under the law to repair damages. At the time the supplemental report was completed, 70 percent of the damages had been resolved, rather than the 58 percent in the original report.

To better clarify the effects of underground mining, DEP is contracting with consultants to perform independent, scientific studies. Three separate studies will evaluate the effects of subsidence on streams, wetlands and riparian areas, forestland, and property values.

The supplemental report is intended to be read in conjunction with the 1999 report to provide the full scope of the study. Included with the supplemental report is an "At A Glance" section that provides a detailed summary of the data. The supplement, as well as the 1999 report, are both available on DEP's website at [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us) (choose directLINK "Act 54").

Sincerely,

James M. Seif  
Secretary