

If the U.S. requires the grading of lambs, and, at the same time, permits the grading of imported lambs in the country of origin by officials of that country, the economic effects of such a compulsory grading standard on the exporting country would be lessened. If this is not permitted, the country would have to leave the bone ends on the trotters, a practice which is not routine at the present time. This would mean a change in the slaughter technique in the originating country, an increase of a few ounces in the shipping weight of each carcass, and an increased cost of having each imported carcass graded at producer expense by U.S. Department of Agriculture personnel. It appears that such mandatory grading would not materially affect the number of imported lambs, since imported lambs tend to be younger than domestic ones at time of slaughter. Under a required grading program, domestic stock would also have to be graded and some domestic producers may consider this an undesirable requirement.

Any further information on these or other economic or regulatory impacts would be welcome. If there are related issues not mentioned, but relevant, any information or comments on such issues should also be submitted for evaluation.

Done at Washington, D.C., on November 14, 1997.

Thomas J. Billy,
Administrator.

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

17 CFR Part 230

[Release No. 33-7476; File No. S7-22-97]

RIN 3235-AH23

Equity Index Insurance Products

AGENCY: Securities and Exchange Commission.

ACTION: Concept release; extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: The Commission is extending from November 20, 1997, to January 5, 1998, the comment period for Securities Act Release No. 7438 (Aug. 20, 1997), 62 FR 45359 (Aug. 27, 1997). This release requested public comment on the structure of equity index insurance products, the manner in which they are marketed, and any other matters the Commission should consider in addressing federal securities law issues raised by equity index insurance products.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before January 5, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted in triplicate to Jonathan G. Katz, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549-6009.

Comments also may be submitted electronically at the following E-mail address: rule-comments@sec.gov. All comment letters should refer to File No. S7-22-97; this file number should be included on the subject line if E-mail is used. All comments received will be available for public inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Room, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549-6009. Electronically submitted comments will also be posted on the Commission's internet site (<http://www.sec.gov>).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Megan L. Dunphy, Attorney, (202) 942-0670, Office of Insurance Products, Division of Investment Management, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Mail Stop 10-6, Washington, D.C. 20549-6009.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 20, 1997, the Commission issued a concept release soliciting comment on the structure of equity index insurance products, the manner in which they are marketed, and any other matters the Commission should consider in addressing federal securities law issues raised by equity index insurance products.¹ The Commission requested that comments on the release be received by November 20, 1997.

In a letter dated November 3, 1997, the American Council of Life Insurance ("ACLI") requested a 45-day extension of time within which to comment on the concept release.² The ACLI requested the extension to provide an opportunity for careful analysis and constructive comment on the release.

To permit additional time for careful analysis and constructive comment, and in light of the importance of comments on this subject, the Commission believes that a 45-day extension of the comment period is appropriate. Therefore, the comment period for responding to Securities Act Release No. 7438 is extended to January 5, 1998.

November 17, 1997.

¹ Securities Act Rel. No. 7438 (Aug. 20, 1997) [62 FR 45359 (Aug. 27, 1997)].

² Letter from Carl B. Wilkerson, Senior Counsel, American Council of Life Insurance, to Jonathan G. Katz, Secretary, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (Nov. 3, 1997).

By the Commission.

Margaret H. McFarland,

Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-30629 Filed 11-20-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

30 CFR Part 920

[MD-042-FOR]

Maryland Regulatory Program

AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM), Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule; public comment period and opportunity for public hearing.

SUMMARY: OSM is announcing receipt of proposed amendments to the Maryland regulatory program (hereinafter the "Maryland program") under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). The proposed amendments consist of revision to the Maryland regulations regarding a reduced bond liability period for lands mined. The amendments are intended to revise the Maryland program to be consistent with the corresponding Federal regulations.

DATES: Written comments must be received by 4:00 p.m., E.S.T., December 22, 1997. If requested, a public hearing on the proposed amendment will be held on December 16, 1997. Requests to speak at the hearing must be received by 4:00 p.m., E.S.T., on December 8, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and requests to speak at the hearing should be mailed or hand delivered to George Rieger, Field Branch Chief, at the address listed below.

Copies of the Maryland program, the proposed amendment, a listing of any scheduled public hearings, and all written comments received in response to this document will be available for public review at the addresses listed below during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Each requester may receive one free copy of the proposed amendment by contacting OSM's Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center.

George Rieger, Field Branch Chief,
Appalachian Regional Coordinating
Center, Office of Surface Mining
Reclamation and Enforcement, 3
Parkway Center, Pittsburgh PA 15220
Telephone: (412) 937-2153

Maryland Bureau of Mines, 160 South Water Street, Frostburg, Maryland 21532, Telephone: (301) 689-4132.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: George Rieger, Field Branch Chief, Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center, Telephone: (412) 937-2153.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background on the Maryland Program

On February 18, 1982, the Secretary of the Interior approved the Maryland program. Background information on the Maryland program, including the Secretary's findings, the disposition of comments, and the conditions of approval can be found in the February 18, 1982, **Federal Register** (47 FR 7214). Subsequent actions concerning the conditions of approval and program amendments can be found at 30 CFR 920.15 and 920.16.

II. Description of the Proposed Amendment

Maryland provided an informal amendment to OSM regarding a reduced bond liability period for land remined in a letter dated August 18, 1996. OSM completed its review of the informal amendment and submitted comments to Maryland in a letter dated August 4, 1997. By letter dated October 9, 1997 (Administrative Record No. MD-579-00), Maryland submitted its response to OSM's comments in the form of a proposed amendment to its program pursuant to SMCRA.

The provisions of the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) that Maryland proposes to amend are as follows:

1. COMAR 26.20.01.02B Definitions

Specifically, Maryland proposes to delete the existing definition at (49), "keyway," and add a new definition at (49) as follows:

"Lands eligible for remining" means any land that would otherwise be eligible for expenditures under Environment Article, Title 15, Subtitle 11, Annotated Code of Maryland.

2. COMAR 26.20.14.05 Duration of Performance Bonds

Paragraph B. is modified by adding to the opening phrase, "except on lands eligible for remining," and new paragraph C. is added as follows:

On lands eligible for remining included in permits issued before September 30, 2004, or any later date authorized by the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, or any renewal thereof, the period of liability for a bond shall continue for a

period of not less than 2 full years, beginning with the last year of augmented seeding, fertilizing, irrigation, or other work. The period of liability shall begin again when augmented seeding, fertilizing, irrigation or other work is ordered by the Bureau to correct a failure to maintain the permanent vegetative cover required under COMAR 08.20.29 on the site.

Existing paragraph C. is re-lettered as D. and the 5-year reference is deleted.

3. COMAR 26.20.14.08. Criteria and Schedule for Release of Performance Bond

Existing paragraph D.(2) is deleted and new paragraph D.(2) is added as follows:

For acreage on which Reclamation Phase II has been completed and for which a bond release application has been submitted, an amount of bond not to exceed 50 percent of the per acre rate submitted in accordance with Regulation .03D of this chapter may be released;

Existing paragraph D.(3) is deleted and new paragraph D.(3) is added as follows:

For acreage on which Reclamation Phase III has been completed and for which a bond release application has been submitted, the remaining amount of bond equal to 50 percent of the per acre rate submitted in accordance with Regulation .03D of this chapter may be released;

New paragraph D.(4) is added as follows:

On lands eligible for remining, for acreage on which Reclamation Phases II and III have been completed and for which a bond release application has been submitted, bond in the amount of the per acre rate submitted in accordance with Regulation .03D of this chapter may be released.

4. COMAR 26.20.29.07. Standards for Success

Existing paragraph B.(8) is revised by adding the phrase "except on lands eligible for remining as provided in §B.(9) of this regulation."

New paragraph B.(9) is added as follows:

On lands eligible for remining included in permits issued before September 30, 2004, or on any later date authorized by the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, or any renewal thereof, the period of responsibility shall continue for a period of not less than 2 full years.

New paragraph C. is added as follows:

On lands eligible for remining included in any permit, the lands shall

equal or exceed the standards for success during the growing season of the last year of the responsibility period of §B(9) of this regulation.

5. COMAR 08.20.14.14 Release of Bonds on Remining Areas

Maryland proposed to add, and the Office Of Surface Mining approved, this section as published in the **Federal Register** (61 FR 12028) dated March 25, 1996. However, Maryland subsequently chose not to promulgate this regulation. Instead, Maryland now proposes the changes enumerated in Items 1. through 4. above.

III. Public Comments Procedures

In accordance with the provisions of 30 CFR 732.17(h), OSM is seeking comments on whether the proposed amendment satisfies the applicable program approval criteria of 30 CFR 732.15. If the amendment is deemed adequate, it will become part of the Maryland program.

Written Comments

Written comments should be specific, pertain only to the issues proposed in this rulemaking, and include explanations in support of the commenter's recommendations. Comments received after the time indicated under "DATES" or at locations other than the Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center will not necessarily be considered in the final rulemaking or included in the Administrative Record.

Public Hearing

Persons wishing to speak at the public hearing should contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** by 4:00 p.m., E.S.T. December 8, 1997. The location and time of the hearing will be arranged with those persons requesting the hearing. If no one requests an opportunity to speak at the public hearing, the hearing will not be held.

Filing of a written statement at the time of the hearing is requested as it will greatly assist the transcriber. Submission of written statements in advance of the hearing will allow OSM officials to prepare adequate responses and appropriate questions.

The public hearing will continue on the specified date until all persons scheduled to speak have been heard. Persons in the audience who have not been scheduled to speak, and who wish to do so, will be heard following those who have been scheduled. The hearing will end after all persons scheduled to speak and persons present in the

audience who wish to speak have been heard.

Any disabled individual who has need for special accommodation to attend a public hearing should contact the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Public Meeting

If only one person requests an opportunity to speak at a hearing, a public meeting, rather than a public hearing, may be held. Persons wishing to meet with OSM representatives to discuss the proposed amendment may request a meeting by contacting the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. All such meetings will be open to the public and, if possible, notices of meetings will be posted at the locations listed under **ADDRESSES**. A written summary of each meeting will be made a part of the Administrative Record.

IV. Procedural Determinations

Executive Order 12866

This rule is exempted from review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under Executive Order 12866 (Regulatory Planning and Review).

Executive Order 12988

The Department of the Interior has conducted the reviews required by section 3 of Executive Order 12988 (Civil Justice Reform) and has determined that, to the extent allowed by law, this rule meets the applicable standards of subsections (a) and (b) of that section. However, these standards are not applicable to the actual language of State regulatory programs and program amendments since each such program is drafted and promulgated by a specific State, not by OSM. Under sections 503 and 505 of SMCRA (30 U.S.C. 1253 and 1255) and 30 CFR 730.11, 732.15, and 732.17(h)(10), decisions on proposed State regulatory programs and program amendments submitted by the States must be based solely on a determination of whether the submittal is consistent with SMCRA and its implementing Federal regulations and whether the other requirements of 30 CFR Parts 730, 731, and 732 have been met.

National Environmental Policy Act

No environmental impact statement is required for this rule since section 702(d) of SMCRA (30 U.S.C. 1292(d)) provides that agency decisions on proposed State regulatory program provisions do not constitute major

Federal actions within the meaning of section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).

Paperwork Reduction Act

This rule does not contain information collection requirements that require approval by OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3507 *et seq.*).

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Department of the Interior has determined that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). The State submittal which is the subject of this rule is based upon counterpart Federal regulations for which an economic analysis was prepared and certification made that such regulations would not have a significant economic effect upon a substantial number of small entities. Accordingly, this rule will ensure that existing requirements previously promulgated by OSM will be implemented by the State. In making the determination as to whether this rule would have a significant economic impact, the Department relied upon the data and assumptions for the counterpart Federal regulations.

Unfunded Mandates

This rule will not impose a cost of \$100 million or more in any given year on any governmental entity or the private sector.

List of Subjects in 30 CFR Part 920

Intergovernmental relations, Surface mining, Underground mining.

Dated: November 14, 1997.

Tim L. Dieringer,

Acting Regional Director, Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center.

[FR Doc. 97-30598 Filed 11-20-97; 8:45 am]

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ARCHITECTURAL AND TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS COMPLIANCE BOARD

36 CFR Parts 1190 and 1191

Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas; Meeting of Regulatory Negotiation Committee

AGENCY: Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

ACTION: Regulatory negotiation committee meeting.

SUMMARY: The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) has established a regulatory negotiation committee to develop a proposed rule on accessibility guidelines for newly constructed and altered outdoor developed areas covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Architectural Barriers Act. This document announces the dates, times, and location of the next meeting of the committee, which is open to the public.

DATES: The committee will meet on: Sunday, December 14, 1997, 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Monday, December 15, 1997, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and Tuesday, December 16, 1997, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The committee will meet at the Wyndham Sea Tac Hotel, 18118 Pacific Highway South, Seattle, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peggy Greenwell, Office of Technical and Information Services, Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, 1331 F Street, NW., suite 1000, Washington, DC, 20004-1111. Telephone number (202) 272-5434 extension 34 (Voice); (202) 272-5449 (TTY). This document is available in alternate formats (cassette tape, braille, large print, or computer disc) upon request. This document is also available on the Board's web site (<http://www.access-board.gov/rules/outdoor.htm>).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In June 1997, the Access Board established a regulatory negotiation committee to develop a proposed rule on accessibility guidelines for newly constructed and altered outdoor developed areas covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Architectural Barriers Act. (62 FR 30546, June 4, 1997). The committee will hold its next meeting on the dates and at the location announced above. The meeting is open to the public. The meeting site is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Individuals with hearing impairments who require sign language interpreters should contact Peggy Greenwell by December 1, 1997, by calling (202) 272-5434 extension 34 (voice) or (202) 272-5449 (TTY).

Lawrence W. Roffee,

Executive Director.

[FR Doc. 97-30652 Filed 11-20-97; 8:45 am]

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