

Public Law 105-279
105th Congress

An Act

Oct. 23, 1998

[H.R. 1659]

Mount St. Helens
National Volcanic
Monument
Completion Act.
16 USC 431 note.

To provide for the expeditious completion of the acquisition of private mineral interests within the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument mandated by the 1982 Act that established the Monument, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument Completion Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Act entitled "An Act to designate the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument in the State of Washington, and for other purposes", approved August 26, 1982 (96 Stat. 301; 16 U.S.C. 431 note), required the United States to acquire all land and interests in land in the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument.

(2) The Act directed the Secretary of Agriculture to acquire the surface interests and the mineral and geothermal interests by separate exchanges and expressed the sense of the Congress that the exchanges be completed by November 24, 1982, and August 26, 1983, respectively.

(3) The surface interests exchange was consummated timely, but the exchange of all mineral and geothermal interests has not yet been completed a decade and a half after the enactment of the Act.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this Act is to facilitate and otherwise provide for the expeditious completion of the previously mandated Federal acquisition of private mineral and geothermal interests within the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument.

SEC. 3. ACQUISITION OF MINERAL AND GEOTHERMAL INTERESTS WITHIN MOUNT ST. HELENS NATIONAL VOLCANIC MONUMENT.

Section 3 of the Act entitled "An Act to designate the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument in the State of Washington, and for other purposes", approved August 26, 1982 (Public Law 97-243; 96 Stat. 302; 16 U.S.C. 431 note), is amended by adding at the end the following new subsections:

"(g) **EXCHANGES FOR MINERAL AND GEOTHERMAL INTERESTS HELD BY CERTAIN COMPANIES.**—

“(1) DEFINITION OF COMPANY.—In this subsection, the term ‘company’ means a company referred to in subsection (c) or its assigns or successors.

“(2) EXCHANGE REQUIRED.—Within 60 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Secretary of the Interior shall acquire by exchange the mineral and geothermal interests in the Monument of each company.

“(3) MONETARY CREDITS.—

“(A) ISSUANCE.—In exchange for all mineral and geothermal interests acquired by the Secretary of the Interior from each company under paragraph (2), the Secretary of the Interior shall issue to each such company monetary credits with a value of \$2,100,000 that may be used for the payment of—

“(i) not more than 50 percent of the bonus or other payments made by successful bidders in any sales of mineral, oil, gas, or geothermal leases under the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.), the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.), or the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) in the contiguous 48 States;

“(ii) not more than 10 percent of the bonus or other payments made by successful bidders in any sales of mineral, oil, gas, or geothermal leases in Alaska under the laws specified in clause (i);

“(iii) not more than 50 percent of any royalty, rental, or advance royalty payment made to the United States to maintain any mineral, oil or gas, or geothermal lease in the contiguous 48 States issued under the laws specified in clause (i); or

“(iv) not more than 10 percent of any royalty, rental, or advance royalty payment made to the United States to maintain any mineral, oil or gas, or geothermal lease in Alaska issued under the laws specified in clause (i).

“(B) VALUE OF CREDITS.—The total credits of \$4,200,000 in value issued under subparagraph (A) are deemed to equal the fair market value of all mineral and geothermal interests to be conveyed by exchange under paragraph (2).

“(4) ACCEPTANCE OF CREDITS.—The Secretary of the Interior shall accept credits issued under paragraph (3)(A) in the same manner as cash for the payments described in such paragraph. The use of the credits shall be subject to the laws (including regulations) governing such payments, to the extent the laws are consistent with this subsection.

“(5) TREATMENT OF CREDITS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO STATES.—All amounts in the form of credits accepted by the Secretary of the Interior under paragraph (4) for the payments described in paragraph (3)(A) shall be considered to be money received for the purpose of section 35 of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 191) and section 20 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1019).

“(6) EXCHANGE ACCOUNT.—

“(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, not later than 30 days after the completion of the exchange with a company required by paragraph

(2), the Secretary of the Interior shall establish an exchange account for that company for the monetary credits issued to that company under paragraph (3). The account for a company shall be established with the Minerals Management Service of the Department of the Interior and have an initial balance of credits equal to \$2,100,000.

“(B) USE OF CREDITS.—The credits in a company’s account shall be available to the company for the purposes specified in paragraph (3)(A). The Secretary of the Interior shall adjust the balance of credits in the account to reflect credits accepted by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to paragraph (4).

“(C) TRANSFER OR SALE OF CREDITS.—

“(i) TRANSFER OR SALE AUTHORIZED.—A company may transfer or sell any credits in the company’s account to another person.

“(ii) USE OF TRANSFERRED CREDITS.—Credits transferred or sold under clause (i) may be used in accordance with this subsection only by a person that is qualified to bid on, or that holds, a mineral, oil, or gas lease under the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.), the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.), or the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.).

“(iii) NOTIFICATION.—Within 30 days after the transfer or sale of any credits by a company, that company shall notify the Secretary of the Interior of the transfer or sale. The transfer or sale of any credit shall not be considered valid until the Secretary of the Interior has received the notification required under this clause.

“(D) TIME LIMIT ON USE OF CREDITS.—On the date that is 5 years after the date on which an account is created under subparagraph (A) for a company, the Secretary of the Interior shall terminate that company’s account. Any credits that originated in the terminated account and have not been used as of the termination date, including any credits transferred or sold under subparagraph (C), shall become unusable.

“(7) TITLE TO INTERESTS.—On the date of the establishment of an exchange account for a company under paragraph (6)(A), title to any mineral and geothermal interests that are held by the company and are to be acquired by the Secretary of the Interior under paragraph (2) shall transfer to the United States.

“(h) OTHER MINERAL AND GEOTHERMAL INTERESTS.—Within 180 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report—

Reports.

“(1) identifying all remaining privately held mineral interests within the boundaries of the Monument referred to in section 1(a); and

“(2) setting forth a plan and a timetable by which the Secretary would propose to complete the acquisition of such interests.”.

Approved October 23, 1998.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 1659 (S. 638):

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 105-704 (Comm. on Resources).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 105-229 accompanying S. 638 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 144 (1998):

Sept. 23, considered and passed House.

Oct. 7, considered and passed Senate.