

on steep slopes in this State, which will extend the surface mining industry for another 20 years. This estimate must be considered with that of the Maryland Geological Survey which indicates that a minimum of 36 million tons, or at least 20 years of coal reserves, are still available to the industry from mining existing slopes under 20 degrees. The data indicates to me no immediate or pressing need to repeal the prohibition against steep slope mining given the environmental risks and unresolved regulatory issues.

Therefore, for these reasons, I have decided to veto House Bill 466 and Senate Bill 230.

Sincerely,
Harry Hughes
Governor

House Bill No. 466

AN ACT concerning

Open-Pit or Strip Mining

FOR the purpose of repealing a provision of law that prohibits the Bureau of Mines from issuing authorizing the Department of Natural Resources to issue an open-pit or strip mining permit on slopes of 20 degrees or more from the horizontal, subject to certain conditions; authorizing the Department to deny a strip mining permit on slopes of 20 degrees or more from the horizontal based on certain considerations; altering certain provisions of law relating to the issuance of a permit; requiring a certain report to the General Assembly; repealing certain provisions of law concerning strip mining and permits for certain mining operations on slopes of 20 degrees or more from the horizontal; and authorizing the Department to require an operator of strip mining on any slope to comply with certain requirements.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article - Natural Resources
Section 7-505
Annotated Code of Maryland
(1983 Replacement Volume and 1984 Supplement)

Preamble

WHEREAS, Open-pit or strip mining is already allowed in Maryland in certain situations on slopes of 20 degrees or more; and