TITLE 30—MINERAL LANDS AND MINING

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CHAPTER 16—MINERAL DEVELOPMENT OF LANDS WITHDRAWN FOR POWER DEVELOPMENT

Sec. 621. Entry to lands reserved for power development.

All public lands belonging to the United States heretofore, now or hereafter withdrawn or reserved for power development or power sites shall be open to entry for location and patent of mining claims and for mining, development, beneficiation, removal, and utilization of the mineral resources of such lands under applicable Federal statutes: Provided, That all power rights to such lands shall be retained by the United States: Provided further, That locations made under this chapter within the revested Oregon and California Railroad and reconveyed Coos Bay Wagon grant lands shall also be subject to the provisions of the Act of April 8, 1948, Public Law 477 (Eightieth Congress, second session): And provided further, That nothing contained herein shall be construed to open for the purposes described in this section any lands

1. which are included in any project operating or being constructed under a license or permit issued under the Federal Power Act [16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.] or other Act of Congress, or
2. which are under examination and survey by a prospective licensee of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, if such prospective licensee holds an uncanceled preliminary permit issued under the Federal Power Act authorizing him to conduct such examination and survey with respect to such lands and such permit has not been renewed in the case of such prospective licensee more than once.

(b) Placer claims; notice; hearing; order; rules and regulations

The locator of a placer claim under this chapter, however, shall conduct no mining operations for a period of sixty days after the filing of a notice of location pursuant to section 623 of this title. If the Secretary of the Interior, within sixty days from the filing of the notice of location, notifies the locator by registered mail or certified mail of the Secretary’s intention to hold a public hearing to determine whether placer mining operations would substantially interfere with other uses of the land included within the placer claim, mining operations on that claim shall be further suspended until the Secretary has held the hearing and has issued an appropriate order. The order issued by the Secretary of the Interior shall provide for one of the following:

1. a complete prohibition of placer mining;
2. a permission to engage in placer mining upon the condition that the locator shall, following placer operations, restore the surface of the claim to the condition in which it was immediately prior to those operations; or
3. a general permission to engage in placer mining. No order by the Secretary with respect to such operations shall be valid unless a certified copy is filed in the same State or county office in which the locator’s notice of location has been filed in compliance with the United States mining laws.

The Secretary shall establish such rules and regulations as he deems desirable concerning bonds and deposits with respect to the restoration of lands to their condition prior to placer mining operations. Moneys received from any bond or deposit shall be used for the restoration of the surface of the claim involved, and any money received in excess of the amount needed for the restoration of the surface of that claim shall be refunded.
(c) **Validity of withdrawals unaffected**

Nothing in this chapter shall affect the validity of withdrawals or reservations for purposes other than power development.


**References in Text**

Act of April 8, 1948, referred to in subsec. (a), is act Apr. 8, 1948, ch. 179, 62 Stat. 162, which is not classified to the Code.

The Federal Power Act, referred to in subsec. (a), is act June 10, 1920, ch. 285, 41 Stat. 1063, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 12 (§ 791a et seq.) of Title 16, Conservation. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 791a of Title 16 and Tables.

**Amendments**

1960—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 86–507 inserted “or certified mail” after “registered mail”.

**Short Title**

Section 1 of act Aug. 11, 1955, provided: “That this Act [enacting this chapter] may be cited as the ‘Mining Claims Rights Restoration Act of 1955’.”

**Transfer of Functions**


§ 622. Liability for damage, destruction, or loss of claim

Prospecting and exploration for and the development and utilization of mineral resources authorized in this chapter shall be entered into or continued at the financial risk of the individual party or parties undertaking such work: Provided, That the United States, its permittees and licensees shall not be responsible or held liable or incur any liability for the damage, destruction, or loss of any mining claim, mill site, facility installed or erected, income, or other property or investments resulting from the actual use of such lands or portions thereof for power development at any time where such power development is made by or under the authority of the United States, except where such damage, destruction, or loss results from the negligence of the United States, its permittees and licensees.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 797, § 3, 69 Stat. 682.)

§ 623. Recording and reporting of unpatented claims; time

The owner of any unpatented mining claim located on land described in section 621 of this title shall file for record in the United States district land office of the land district in which the claim is situated

(I) within one year after August 11, 1955, as to any or all locations heretofore made, or within sixty days of location as to locations hereafter made, a copy of the notice of location of the claim;
(2) within sixty days after the expiration of any annual assessment year, a statement as to the assessment work done or improvements made during the previous assessment year.


§ 624. Protection of existing valid claims

Nothing in this chapter contained shall be construed to limit or restrict the rights of the owner or owners of any valid mining claim located prior to the date of withdrawal or reservation: Provided, That nothing in this chapter shall be construed to limit or restrict the rights of the owner or owners of any mining claim who are diligently working to make a discovery of valuable minerals at the time any future withdrawal or reservation for power development is made.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 797, § 5, 69 Stat. 683.)

§ 625. Prohibition of unspecified use

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, all mining claims and mill sites or mineral rights located under the terms of this chapter or otherwise contained on the public lands as described in section 621 of this title shall be used only for the purposes specified in section 621 of this title and no facility or activity shall be erected or conducted thereon for other purposes.

(Aug. 11, 1955, ch. 797, § 6, 69 Stat. 683.)