

## **A Message from Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty**

You hold in your hands the culmination of many years of research into the use of coal ash in mine reclamation throughout the Commonwealth. This information has been gleaned from various reclamation projects and meticulously reviewed and analyzed by members of the scientific community, and has contributed to the formation of Pennsylvania's stringent regulatory program, a program so effective it could serve as a basis for coal ash regulations under development by the federal government. The attention to detail demonstrated by the Commonwealth ensures the appropriate use of coal ash, which can be extremely beneficial in reclaiming mine sites that would otherwise threaten the health and safety of Pennsylvania's residents and environment.



It is estimated that Pennsylvania has over 5,000 abandoned mine sites, effecting hundreds of thousands of acres of land, many of which are located near local communities. The Commonwealth is also home to several thousand miles of streams impaired by acid mine drainage. The information presented in this book, the most up-to-date statewide data currently available, demonstrates that alkaline coal ash can help remediate acid mine drainage and reclaim abandoned pits and other mine sites.

Based on this information, the Rendell Administration is including the consumption of waste coal in its high-priority Pennsylvania Energy Harvest grant program, which provides the last increment of financing for clean and renewable energy projects to be built in Pennsylvania from sources such as waste-coal, coal-bed methane, landfill methane, biomass, wind, solar and small-scale hydroelectric. The Commonwealth is home to thousands of acres of coal refuse piles as a result of its mining legacy, and these piles commonly cause acid mine drainage and refuse bank fires. By enabling the consumption of these piles in waste coal-fired power plants, the Rendell Administration is removing an environmental hazard and creating alkaline coal ash that can then be used to reclaim mine sites.

Put simply, there are still many years worth of reclamation work left to be accomplished, and if we're going to continue to enjoy success in reclaiming these sites, we need to thoroughly examine every possible tool available to us. The information presented here clearly shows that coal ash, when used appropriately, is a very effective one.

We at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection salute the members of academia, government, industry and the scientific community who participated in these studies and for their dedication to reclaiming our abandoned mine legacy and restoring our environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen A. McGinty". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Kathleen A. McGinty, Secretary  
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection