

SENATE BILL 899

By Watson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 59,  
Chapter 8, Part 2; Section 66-5-102 and Section  
67-5-804, relative to mining.

WHEREAS, wide variations in the circumstances and conditions surrounding and arising out of the surface mining of minerals, including rock harvesting, have resulted in the need to foster certainty and uniformity in the application of the surface mining law in this state; and

WHEREAS, unregulated surface mining of minerals, including rock harvesting, can cause hardship and collateral damage to surface and mineral owners, and it is necessary to provide for the regulation and control of surface mining so as to minimize the injurious effects of surface mining; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to facilitate and require the demonstration of a clear understanding between the owners of surface and mineral estates in land concerning the owners' respective rights to use and occupy or modify the surface of the land; now, therefore,  
BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 59-8-201, is amended by deleting the section in its entirety and by substituting instead the following:

This part shall be known and may be cited as the "Tennessee Non-Coal Surface Mining Act."

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 59-8-202(3), is amended by deleting the language "board of reclamation review as created by the Tennessee Coal Surface Mining Law of 1980, compiled in part 3 of this chapter" and by substituting instead the language "Tennessee water quality control board established by § 69-3-104".

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 59-8-202(5), is amended by deleting the language "division of surface mining and reclamation" and by substituting instead the language "division of water pollution control".

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 59-8-202, is amended by deleting subdivision (7) in its entirety and by substituting instead the following:

(7)(A) "Mineral" means, in any county having a population of more than eight hundred thousand (800,000) according to the 2000 federal census or any subsequent federal census, clay, stone, chert, dimension stone, flagstone, fieldstone, landscaping stone, drystack stone, façade, gravel, sand, phosphate rock, metallic ore and any other solid material or substance of commercial value found in natural deposits on or in the earth, but does not include marble, limestone or coal;

(B) "Mineral" means, in any county having a population of eight hundred thousand (800,000) or less according to the 2000 federal census or any subsequent federal census, clay, stone, chert, dimension stone, flagstone, fieldstone, landscaping stone, drystack stone, façade, phosphate rock, metallic ore, and any other solid material or substance of commercial value found in natural deposits on or in the earth, but does not include marble, limestone, coal, gravel or sand; and

(C) "Mineral" means, on any land on which the state, or any department, agency, or other unit of state government, owns the surface interest, clay, stone, marble, chert, dimension stone, flagstone, fieldstone, landscaping stone, drystack stone, façade, gravel, sand, phosphate rock, metallic ore and any other solid material or substance of commercial value found in natural deposits on or in the earth, but does not include coal.

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 59-8-202, is amended by deleting subdivision (9) in its entirety and by substituting instead the following:

(9) "Operator" means any person engaged in surface mining who disturbs or intends to disturb one (1) acre or more of land; provided, however, that operator does not include a person who engages in rock harvesting and is the surface owner at the location where the rock or stone is removed nor a person who engages in rock harvesting with the written consent of the surface owner as provided in Section 8 of this act. Any operator who has obtained a permit and otherwise complied with the provisions of this part may subcontract any part or all of the mining of the lands covered by the permit to subcontractors and such subcontractors are not considered an operator within the meaning of this part;

SECTION 6. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 59-8-202, is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated subdivision:

( ) "Rock harvesting" means the removal of rock or stone for commercial sale for decorative purposes including, but not limited to: dimension stone, flagstone, fieldstone, landscaping stone, drystack stone, façade and chert from land, but does not include the removal of those materials exempted in subdivision (7)(B);

SECTION 7. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 59-8-205(a)(1), is amended by redesignating subdivision (G) as subdivision (H), by deleting subdivision (F) in its entirety and by substituting instead the following language:

(F)

(i) Identification of the source of the operator's legal right to enter and mine the minerals on the land affected by the permit and whether that right is the subject of pending court litigation; and

(ii) Evidence of the operator's legal right to surface mine the minerals on the land affected by the permit. If the surface estate has been severed from the mineral estate, such evidence may be provided by either:

(a) A deed, lease, or other document which severs the mineral rights and expressly permits the removal of minerals by surface mining or a certified extract of the appropriate provisions of such documents; or

(b) A deed, lease or conveyance which severs the mineral rights without specific provisions for surface mining and an accompanying affidavit by the current surface estate owner agreeing to the removal of such minerals by surface mining;

(G) In cases where the private mineral estate has been severed from the private surface estate:

(i) The written consent of the surface owner to the extraction of minerals by surface mining methods; or

(ii) A conveyance that expressly grants or reserves the right to extract the minerals by surface mining methods. If the conveyance does not expressly grant the right to extract minerals by surface mining methods, then the surface-subsurface legal relationship shall be determined by law. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the commissioner to adjudicate property rights disputes; and

SECTION 8. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 59, Chapter 8, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated section:

Section 59-8-2\_\_.

(a) A person who legally owns or possesses mineral rights and who has entered into the following agreement with the owner of the surface rights may engage in rock harvesting without being subject to the requirements of this part if the owner of the surface rights at the location has:

(1) Signed and notarized a form consisting of the same or substantially similar language as subsection (b) with a copy of this part attached; and

(2) Submitted a copy of such form to the department.

(b)

In consideration of the following, the parties named below do hereby enter into the following enforceable agreement.

(a) The surface owner agrees as follows:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the owner of the surface rights of the real property described as follows, \_\_\_\_\_.

I agree that \_\_\_\_\_ may engage in rock harvesting on my land. I understand that:

(1) This rock harvesting will / will not (circle one) include blasting;

(2) This rock harvesting will / will not (circle one) include the operation of bulldozers;

(3) This rock harvesting will / will not (circle one) include the operation of trucks larger than pickup trucks;

(4) This rock harvesting will / will not (circle one) include the operation of front-end loaders;

(5) This rock harvesting will / will not (circle one) include the removal of rock on the surface of the land;

(6) This rock harvesting will / will not (circle one) include cuts or excavation beneath the ground;

(7) (If item (6) indicates it will be included) the rock harvesting will include excavation to a depth of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ feet beneath the surface of the land.

(b) The rock harvester agrees as follows:

(1) I, \_\_\_\_\_, have a legal right to the rock to be removed;

(2) I will only engage in rock harvesting on the property subject to this agreement in accordance with the provisions stated in subsections (a) and (b) of this document; and

(3) After I have removed rock from this property, I will leave the land in the following condition:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

(c) Signatures:

_____	_____
Surface Owner	Rock Harvester
_____	_____
(street address)	(street address)
_____	_____
(city/state)	(city/state)
Subscribed and sworn to before me	Subscribed and sworn to before me
_____	_____
Notary Public	Notary Public
My Commission expires:	My Commission expires:
_____	_____

SECTION 9. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 66-5-102, is amended by deleting the following language in its entirety:

(c) The provisions of this section shall only apply to mineral estates in coal.

SECTION 10. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 67-5-804, is amended by inserting the following language immediately preceding subsection (b) and by redesignating the subsequent subsections accordingly:

(b) Where an owner of surface and mineral rights to real property enters into a contract for the conveyance of mineral rights in such property resulting in a severance of such interests, the parties to such conveyance shall identify the specific mineral interests to be conveyed to the purchaser of the mineral rights. The purchaser of the mineral interests shall identify such interests purchased by providing a deed reference number in accordance with § 67-5-804(c) for the mineral interest with the property assessor in the county in which the interests are located, as prescribed in this section. For the purposes of this section, "specific mineral interests" means only those minerals listed in the deed, as contemplated by the parties. All rights to minerals not described in the deed shall remain with the surface owner. The provisions of this subsection shall apply to all contracts entered into on or after July 1, 2011 and shall not impair the obligation of any existing contract, or be construed to direct courts in determining the intent of the parties who entered into a contract prior to such date.

SECTION 11. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.

SECTION 12. This act shall take effect July 1, 2011, the public welfare requiring it.