

Service may not receive any part of any fees that may be charged.

(f) *Authority to enter into contracts.* The Commissioner may enter into contracts related to receiving payments of tax by credit card or debit card if such contracts are cost beneficial to the Government. The determination of whether the contract is cost beneficial shall be based on an analysis appropriate for the contract at issue and at a level of detail appropriate to the size of the Government's investment or interest. The Commissioner may not pay any fee or charge or provide any other monetary consideration under such contracts for such payments.

(g) *Use and disclosure of information relating to payment of taxes by credit card and debit card.* Any information or data obtained directly or indirectly by any person other than the taxpayer in connection with payment of taxes by a credit card or debit card shall be treated as confidential, whether such information is received from the Internal Revenue Service or from any other person (including the taxpayer).

(1) No person other than the taxpayer shall use or disclose such information except as follows—

(i) Card issuers, financial institutions, or other persons participating in the credit card or debit card transaction may use or disclose such information for the purpose and in direct furtherance of servicing cardholder accounts, including the resolution of errors in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section. This authority includes the following—

(A) Processing the credit card or debit card transaction, in all of its stages through and including the crediting of the amount charged on account of tax to the United States Treasury;

(B) Billing the taxpayer for the amount charged or debited with respect to payment of the tax liability;

(C) Collecting the amount charged or debited with respect to payment of the tax liability;

(D) Returning funds to the taxpayer in accordance with paragraph (d)(3) of this section;

(E) Sending receipts or confirmation of a transaction to the taxpayer, including secured electronic transmissions and facsimiles; and

(F) Providing information necessary to make a payment to state or local government agencies, as explicitly authorized by the taxpayer (e.g., name, address, taxpayer identification number).

(ii) Card issuers, financial institutions or other persons participating in the credit card or debit card transaction may use and disclose such information for

the purpose and in direct furtherance of any of the following activities—

(A) Assessment of statistical risk and profitability;

(B) Transfer of receivables or accounts or any interest therein;

(C) Audit of account information;

(D) Compliance with federal, state, or local law; and

(E) Cooperation in properly authorized civil, criminal, or regulatory investigations by federal, state, or local authorities.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (g)(1) of this section, use or disclosure of information relating to credit card and debit card transactions for purposes related to any of the following is not authorized—

(i) Sale of such information (or transfer of such information for consideration) separate from a sale of the underlying account or receivable (or transfer of the underlying account or receivable for consideration);

(ii) Marketing for any purpose, such as, marketing tax-related products or services, or marketing any product or service that targets those who have used a credit card or debit card to pay taxes; and

(iii) Furnishing such information to any credit reporting agency or credit bureau, except with respect to the aggregate amount of a cardholder's account, with the amount attributable to payment of taxes not separately identified.

(3) Use and disclosure of information other than as authorized by this paragraph (g) may result in civil liability under sections 7431(a)(2) and (h).

(h) Effective date. This section applies to payments of taxes made on and after December 14, 2001.

§ 301.6311-2T [Removed]

Par. 6. Section 301.6311-2T is removed.

Robert E. Wenzel,

Deputy Commissioner of Internal Revenue.

Approved: December 10, 2001.

Mark Weinberger,

Acting Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

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PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

29 CFR Parts 4022 and 4044

Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits

AGENCY: Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's regulations on Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans and Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans prescribe interest assumptions for valuing and paying benefits under terminating single-employer plans. This final rule amends the regulations to adopt interest assumptions for plans with valuation dates in January 2002. Interest assumptions are also published on the PBGC's Web site (<http://www.pbgc.gov>).

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2002.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Harold J. Ashner, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 1200 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20005, 202-326-4024. (TTY/TDD users may call the Federal relay service toll-free at 1-800-877-8339 and ask to be connected to 202-326-4024.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The PBGC's regulations prescribe actuarial assumptions—including interest assumptions—for valuing and paying plan benefits of terminating single-employer plans covered by title IV of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. The interest assumptions are intended to reflect current conditions in the financial and annuity markets.

Three sets of interest assumptions are prescribed: (1) A set for the valuation of benefits for allocation purposes under section 4044 (found in Appendix B to part 4044), (2) a set for the PBGC to use to determine whether a benefit is payable as a lump sum and to determine lump-sum amounts to be paid by the PBGC (found in Appendix B to part 4022), and (3) a set for private-sector pension practitioners to refer to if they wish to use lump-sum interest rates determined using the PBGC's historical methodology (found in Appendix C to part 4022).

Accordingly, this amendment (1) adds to Appendix B to part 4044 the interest assumptions for valuing benefits for allocation purposes in plans with valuation dates during January 2002, (2)

adds to Appendix B to part 4022 the interest assumptions for the PBGC to use for its own lump-sum payments in plans with valuation dates during January 2002, and (3) adds to Appendix C to part 4022 the interest assumptions for private-sector pension practitioners to refer to if they wish to use lump-sum interest rates determined using the PBGC's historical methodology for valuation dates during January 2002.

For valuation of benefits for allocation purposes, the interest assumptions that the PBGC will use (set forth in Appendix B to part 4044) will be 5.80 percent for the first 25 years following the valuation date and 4.25 percent thereafter. These interest assumptions (in comparison with those in effect for December 2001) reflect a 5-year increase in the period during which the initial rate applies (from a period of 20 years following the valuation date to a period of 25 years following the valuation date). The initial rate, in effect during the 25-year period, represents a decrease (from the initial rate in effect for December 2001) of 0.30 percent. The ultimate rate, in effect thereafter, represents a decrease (from the ultimate rate in effect for December 2001) of 2.00 percent.

The interest assumptions that the PBGC will use for its own lump-sum payments (set forth in Appendix B to

part 4022) will be 4.50 percent for the period during which a benefit is in pay status, and 4.00 percent during any years preceding the benefit's placement in pay status. These interest assumptions are unchanged from those in effect for December 2001.

For private-sector payments, the interest assumptions (set forth in Appendix C to part 4022) will be the same as those used by the PBGC for determining and paying lump sums (set forth in Appendix B to part 4022).

The PBGC has determined that notice and public comment on this amendment are impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This finding is based on the need to determine and issue new interest assumptions promptly so that the assumptions can reflect, as accurately as possible, current market conditions.

Because of the need to provide immediate guidance for the valuation and payment of benefits in plans with valuation dates during January 2002, the PBGC finds that good cause exists for making the assumptions set forth in this amendment effective less than 30 days after publication.

The PBGC has determined that this action is not a "significant regulatory action" under the criteria set forth in Executive Order 12866.

Because no general notice of proposed rulemaking is required for this

amendment, the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 does not apply. See 5 U.S.C. 601(2).

List of Subjects

29 CFR Part 4022

Employee benefit plans, Pension insurance, Pensions, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

29 CFR Part 4044

Employee benefit plans, Pension insurance, Pensions.

In consideration of the foregoing, 29 CFR parts 4022 and 4044 are amended as follows:

PART 4022—BENEFITS PAYABLE IN TERMINATED SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS

1. The authority citation for part 4022 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 29 U.S.C. 1302, 1322, 1322b, 1341(c)(3)(D), and 1344.

2. In appendix B to part 4022, Rate Set 99, as set forth below, is added to the table. (The introductory text of the table is omitted.)

Appendix B to Part 4022—Lump Sum Interest Rates For PBGC Payments

* * * * *

Rate set	For plans with a valuation date		Immediate annuity rate (percent)	Deferred annuities (percent)					
	On or after	Before		i ₁	i ₂	i ₃	n ₁	n ₂	
* 99	* 1-1-02	* 2-1-02	* 4.50	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 7	* 8

3. In appendix C to part 4022, Rate Set 99, as set forth below, is added to the table. (The introductory text of the table is omitted.)

Appendix C to Part 4022—Lump Sum Interest Rates For Private-Sector Payments

* * * * *

Rate set	For plans with a valuation date		Immediate annuity rate (percent)	Deferred annuities (percent)					
	On or after	Before		i ₁	i ₂	i ₃	n ₁	n ₂	
* 99	* 1-1-02	* 2-1-02	* 4.50	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 4.00	* 7	* 8

PART 4044—ALLOCATION OF ASSETS IN SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS

4. The authority citation for part 4044 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 29 U.S.C. 1301(a), 1302(b)(3), 1341, 1344, 1362.

5. In appendix B to part 4044, a new entry, as set forth below, is added to the

table. (The introductory text of the table is omitted.)

Appendix B to Part 4044—Interest Rates Used to Value Benefits

* * * * *

For valuation dates occurring in the month—	The values of i_t are:					
	i_t	for $t =$	i_t	for $t =$	i_t	for $t =$
January 20020580	1–25	.0425	>25	N/A	N/A

Issued in Washington, DC, on this 11th day of December 2001.

Steven A. Kandarian,
Executive Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

30 CFR Part 918

[SPATS No. LA–020–FOR]

Louisiana Regulatory Program

AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Interior.

ACTION: Final rule; approval of amendment.

SUMMARY: The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) is approving an amendment to the Louisiana regulatory program (Louisiana program) under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). Louisiana proposed to add standards for measuring revegetation success on pastureland. Louisiana intends to revise the Louisiana program to be consistent with the corresponding Federal regulations and to improve operational efficiency.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 14, 2001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael C. Wolf from, Director, Tulsa Field Office, Office of Surface Mining, 5100 East Skelly Drive, Suite 470, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135–6548. Telephone: (918) 581–6430. Internet: mwolf from@osmre.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

- I. Background on the Louisiana Program
- II. Submission of the Amendment
- III. Director's Findings
- IV. Summary and Disposition of Comments
- V. Director's Decision
- VI. Procedural Determinations

I. Background on the Louisiana Program

Section 503(a) of the Act permits a State to assume primacy for the regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations on non-Federal and non-Indian lands within its borders

by demonstrating that its State program includes, among other things, " * * * a State law which provides for the regulation of surface coal mining and reclamation operations in accordance with the requirements of this Act * * * ; and rules and regulations consistent with regulations issued by the Secretary pursuant to this Act." See 30 U.S.C. 1253(a)(1) and (7). On the basis of these criteria, the Secretary of the Interior conditionally approved the Louisiana program on October 10, 1980. You can find background information on the Louisiana program, including the Secretary's findings and the disposition of comments in the October 10, 1980, **Federal Register** (45 FR 67340). You can find later actions concerning the Louisiana program at 30 CFR 918.15 and 918.16.

II. Submission of the Amendment

By letter dated June 1, 2001 (Administrative Record No. LA–365.04), Louisiana sent us an amendment to its program under SMCRA and the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 732.17(b). Louisiana sent the amendment in response to our letters dated March 24, 1999, and August 16, 2000, that we sent to Louisiana under 30 CFR 732.17 (Administrative Record Nos. LA–365 and LA–365.01, respectively).

We announced receipt of the amendment in the June 27, 2001, **Federal Register** (66 FR 34137). In the same document, we opened the public comment period and provided an opportunity for a public hearing or meeting on the adequacy of the amendment. The public comment period closed on July 27, 2001. Because no one requested a public hearing or meeting, we did not hold one.

During our review of the amendment, we identified concerns relating to sampling procedures; data submission and analysis; data forms for ground cover and whole release area harvesting; example uses of sample adequacy formulas for ground cover and hay production measurements; statistical analysis on whole release area harvesting; and acceptable plant species for permanent ground cover. We notified Louisiana of these concerns by letter dated August 20, 2001 (Administrative Record No. LA–365.10).

By letter dated October 10, 2001 (Administrative Record No. LA–365.11), Louisiana sent revisions to its program amendment. Because the revisions merely clarified certain provisions of Louisiana's amendment, we did not reopen the public comment period.

III. Director's Findings

Following, under SMCRA and the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 732.15 and 732.17, are the Director's findings concerning the amendment to the Louisiana program.

Louisiana submitted revegetation success guidelines that describe the standards and procedures for determining revegetation success on pastureland. The Federal regulations at 30 CFR 816.116(a)(1) require that each regulatory authority select revegetation success standards and statistically valid sampling techniques for measuring revegetation success and include them in its approved regulatory program. Louisiana developed its revegetation success guidelines for pastureland to satisfy this requirement. The guidelines for pastureland include revegetation success standards and statistically valid sampling techniques for measuring revegetation success of reclaimed pastureland in accordance with Louisiana's counterpart to 30 CFR 816.116. Louisiana's standards, criteria, and parameters for revegetation success on pastureland reflect the extent of cover, species composition, and soil stabilization required in the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 816.111. As required by the Federal regulations at 30 CFR 816.116(a)(2) and (b), Louisiana's revegetation success standards include criteria representative of unmined lands in the area being reclaimed to evaluate the appropriate vegetation parameters of ground cover and production suitable to the approved postmining land use of pastureland. Louisiana's guidelines specify the procedures and techniques to be used for sampling, measuring, and analyzing vegetation parameters. Ground cover and production suitable to the approved postmining land use of pastureland is considered equal to the approved success standard when they are not less than 90 percent of the success standard. Sampling techniques for measuring success use a 90-percent statistical confidence interval. We find