

Environmental Protection Agency

§ 144.66

§ 144.64 Incapacity of owners or operators, guarantors, or financial institutions.

(a) An owner or operator must notify the Regional Administrator by certified mail of the commencement of a voluntary or involuntary proceeding under title 11 (Bankruptcy), U.S. Code, naming the owner or operator as debtor, within 10 business days after the commencement of the proceeding. A guarantor of a corporate guarantee as specified in § 144.63(f) must make such a notification if he is named as debtor, as required under the terms of the guarantee (§ 144.70(f)).

(b) An owner or operator who fulfills the requirements of § 144.63 by obtaining a letter of credit, surety bond, or insurance policy will be deemed to be without the required financial assurance or liability coverage in the event of bankruptcy, insolvency, or a suspension or revocation of the license or charter of the issuing institution. The owner or operator must establish other financial assurance or liability coverage within 60 days after such an event.

§ 144.65 Use of State-required mechanisms.

(a) For a facility located in a State where EPA is administering the requirements of this subpart but where the State has plugging and abandonment regulations that include requirements for financial assurance of plugging and abandonment, an owner or operator may use State-required financial mechanisms to meet the requirements of this subpart if the Regional Administrator determines that the State mechanisms are at least equivalent to the mechanisms specified in this subpart. The Regional Administrator will evaluate the equivalency of the mechanisms mainly in terms of (1) certainty of the availability of funds for the required plugging and abandonment activities and (2) the amount of funds that will be made available. The Regional Administrator may also consider other factors. The owner or operator must submit to the Regional Administrator evidence of the establishment of the mechanism together with a letter requesting that the State-required mechanism be considered ac-

ceptable for meeting the requirements of this subpart. The submittal must include the following information: The facility's EPA Identification Number, name and address, and the amounts of funds for plugging and abandonment coverage assured by the mechanism. The Regional Administrator will notify the owner or operator of his determination regarding the mechanism's acceptability. The Regional Administrator may require the owner or operator to submit additional information as is deemed necessary for making this determination.

(b) If a State-required mechanism is found acceptable as specified in paragraph (a) of this section except for the amount of funds available, the owner or operator may satisfy the requirements of this subpart by increasing the funds available through the State-required mechanism or using additional mechanisms as specified in this subpart. The amounts of funds available through the State and Federal mechanisms must at least equal the amounts required by this subpart.

§ 144.66 State assumption of responsibility.

(a) If a State either assumes legal responsibility for an owner's or operator's compliance with the plugging and abandonment requirements of these regulations or assures that funds will be available from State sources to cover these requirements, the owner or operator will be in compliance with the requirements of this subpart if the Regional Administrator determines that the State's assumption of responsibility is at least equivalent to the mechanisms specified in this subpart. The Regional Administrator will evaluate the equivalency of State guarantees mainly in terms of (1) certainty of the availability of funds for the required plugging and abandonment coverage and (2) the amount of funds that will be made available. The Regional Administrator may also consider other factors. The owner or operator must submit to the Regional Administrator a letter from the State describing the nature of the State's assumption of responsibility together with a letter from the owner or operator requesting that the State's assumption of responsibility

be considered acceptable for meeting the requirements of this subpart. The letter from the State must include, or have attached to it, the following information: the facility's EPA Identification Number, name and address, and the amounts of funds for plugging and abandonment coverage that are guaranteed by the State. The Regional Administrator will notify the owner or operator of his determination regarding the acceptability of the State's guarantee in lieu of mechanisms specified in this subpart. The Regional Administrator may require the owner or operator to submit additional information as is deemed necessary to make this determination. Pending this determination, the owner or operator will be deemed to be in compliance with § 144.63.

(b) If a State's assumption of responsibility is found acceptable as specified in paragraph (a) of this section except for the amount of funds available, the owner or operator may satisfy the requirements of this subpart by use of both the State's assurance and additional financial mechanisms as specified in this subpart. The amount of funds available through the State and Federal mechanisms must at least equal the amount required by this subpart.

§ 144.70 Wording of the instruments.

(a)(1) A trust agreement for a trust fund, as specified in § 144.63(a) of this chapter, must be worded as follows, except that instructions in brackets are to be replaced with the relevant information and the brackets deleted:

TRUST AGREEMENT

TRUST AGREEMENT, the "Agreement," entered into as of [date] by and between [name of the owner or operator], a [name of State] [insert "corporation," "partnership," "association," or "proprietorship"], the "Grantor," and [name of corporate trustee], [insert "incorporated in the State of _____" or "a national bank"], the "Trustee."

Whereas, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, "EPA," an agency of the United States Government, has established certain regulations applicable to the Grantor, requiring that an owner or operator of an injection well shall provide assurance that funds will be available when needed for plugging and abandonment of the injection well,

Whereas, the Grantor has elected to establish a trust to provide all or part of such financial assurance for the facility(ies) identified herein,

Whereas, the Grantor, acting through its duly authorized officers, has selected the Trustee to be the trustee under this agreement, and the Trustee is willing to act as trustee,

Now, therefore, the Grantor and the Trustee agree as follows:

Section 1. Definitions. As used in this Agreement:

(a) The term "Grantor" means the owner or operator who enters into this Agreement and any successors or assigns of the Grantor.

(b) The term "Trustee" means the Trustee who enters into this Agreement and any successor Trustee.

(c) Facility or activity means any "underground injection well" or any other facility or activity that is subject to regulation under the Underground Injection Control Program.

Section 2. Identification of Facilities and Cost Estimates. This Agreement pertains to the facilities and cost estimates identified on attached Schedule A [on Schedule A, for each facility list the EPA Identification Number, name, address, and the current plugging and abandonment cost estimate, or portions thereof, for which financial assurance is demonstrated by this Agreement].

Section 3. Establishment of Fund. The Grantor and the Trustee hereby establish a trust fund, the "Fund," for the benefit of EPA. The Grantor and the Trustee intend that no third party have access to the Fund except as herein provided. The Fund is established initially as consisting of the property, which is acceptable to the Trustee, described in Schedule B attached hereto. Such property and any other property subsequently transferred to the Trustee is referred to as the Fund, together with all earnings and profits thereon, less any payments or distributions made by the Trustee pursuant to this Agreement. The Fund shall be held by the Trustee, IN TRUST, as hereinafter provided. The Trustee shall not be responsible nor shall it undertake any responsibility for the amount or adequacy of, nor any duty to collect from the Grantor, any payments necessary to discharge any liabilities of the Grantor established by EPA.

Section 4. Payment for Plugging and Abandonment. The Trustee shall make payments from the Fund as the EPA Regional Administrator shall direct, in writing, to provide for the payment of the costs of plugging and abandonment of the injection wells covered by this Agreement. The Trustee shall reimburse the Grantor or other persons as specified by the EPA Regional Administrator from the Fund for plugging and abandonment expenditures in such amounts as the EPA Regional Administrator shall direct in