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(Wyo.)-State Officials Worry Over Proposed Abandoned Mine Land Fund Cuts



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 09/26/2012 09:23 AM

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (ASSOCIATED PRESS) - Top Wyoming officials say congressional action to block about \$700 million in federal Abandoned Mine Land payments to the state over the next 10 years threatens to be devastating to the state budget.

Gov. Matt Mead and Sen. Phil Nicholas, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee in the Wyoming Legislature, say the loss will leave the state hard-pressed to continue to pay for coal research and other programs it has covered with the AML dollars.

The U.S. Senate on Saturday approved a continuing resolution to fund the federal government that now heads to President Barack Obama. It would cap Wyoming's AML funding at \$15 million a year, down from about \$150 million currently.

Members of Wyoming's congressional delegation promise to continue to seek restoration of the funds.