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Challenge to stripmining regulation to be reviewed

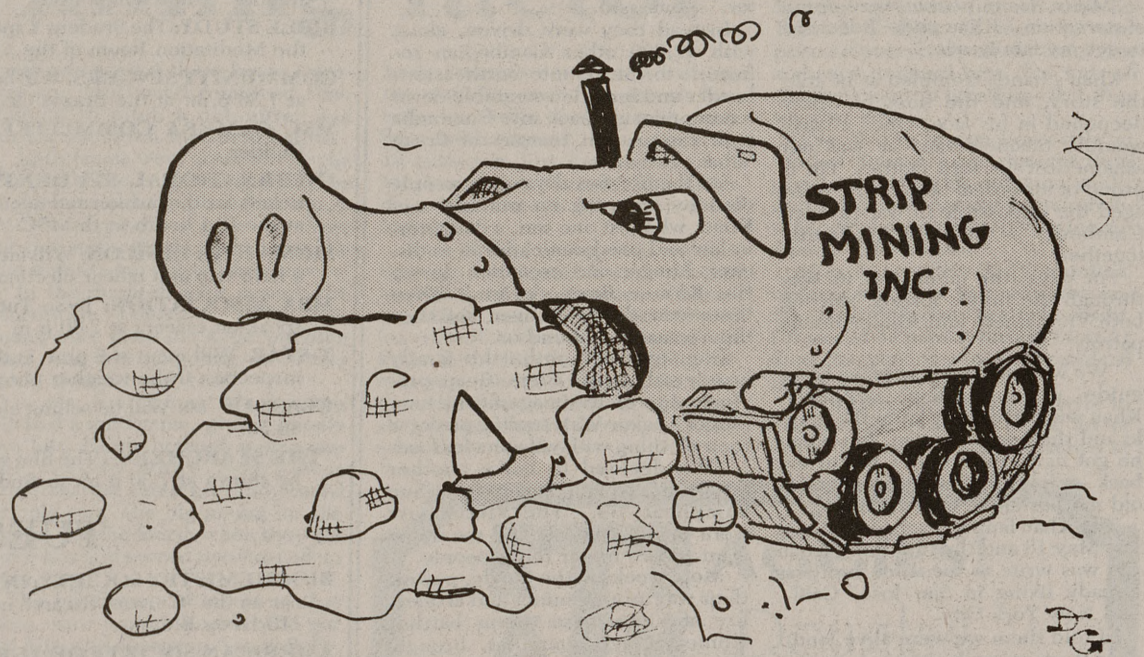
United Press International
 ROANOKE, Va. — The U.S. Supreme Court will decide the merits of a Virginia challenge to federal stripmining regulations that could affect the shape and prosperity of the nation's coal industry for generations to come.

Environmentalists maintain the regulations are needed to prevent further desecration of the earth. But strip mine operators who challenged the law say it amounts to overregulation of private industry.

Former Green Bay Packers football player Carroll Dale, now a strip mine operator in Wise, Va., said, "I'm very much a believer in free enterprise. Of course being in a sport like football where you had rules to go by, I believe in rules, but if you're overregulated in football or anything else, you can't play the game."

Supporters contend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act signed by President Carter in 1977 protects the environment from the ravages of irresponsible strip miners.

The detailed regulations, which became fully effective in January 1979, require mine operators to restore mountains to their approximate original contour and allow federal inspectors to shut down mines for violations.



Surface operators say the act will prevent them from leveling rugged mountains into flatland that has been used as sites for schools, hospitals and shopping centers. Conservationists concede some of the land has become productive but that thousands of acres remain un-

Tax Freedom Day set this year for May 11

United Press International
 WASHINGTON — Economists from Tax Foundation Inc., a nonprofit research and public education organization, have calculated that Tax Freedom Day will fall on May 11 this year.

This is the date the average worker's taxes would be paid if all earnings from Jan. 1 went directly to satisfy obligations to federal, state and local governments.

Last year the group estimated May 8 as Tax Freedom Day, and in 1978 it was May 6.

The foundation said total taxes are estimated at \$820 billion this year, up from \$738 billion in 1979. The share of the average paycheck claimed by taxes will rise from 34.7 percent to 35.8 percent, the foundation said.

"Over the years, tax payments have gradually increased more than incomes, and Tax Freedom Day has come later each year," a spokesman for the foundation said.

From 1930 to 1970, for example, Tax Freedom Day advanced from Feb. 13 to April 30. In the first half of the 1970s, however, taxes generally rose proportionately to earnings, with the result that by 1975 Tax Freedom Day was still computed as April 30. That lull has faded in the

last five years, with the extension of the day to May 11 for 1980.

On a daily basis, the foundation estimated that the average American spends two hours and 52 minutes of an eight-hour work day earning enough money to pay taxes.

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70,000 mentally ill sterilized in U.S. during this century

United Press International
 RICHMOND, Va. — As many as 70,000 mental patients in 30 states were involuntarily sterilized in this century in an attempt to rid society of "defenseless incompetents," a newspaper has reported.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch said in a copyrighted story Sunday that figures showed Virginia was a leading practitioner of eugenic sterilization for about 50 years, and aggressively pursued the practice long after court rulings or public outrage forced dozens of other states to abandon the operations.

The story was the latest in the Times-Dispatch's series of investigations into mass sterilizations, which the newspaper said were an experiment that amounted to "little more than a withering assault on a nation's defenseless incompetents in the name of science."

The newspaper earlier reported that sterilization abuse in Virginia mental institutions during a half-century amounted to more than 8,300 cases. But the Virginia cases represent only a fraction of those that took place elsewhere.

Officials of the Virginia Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union said at the time of the first disclosures they would seek to take the state to court if they could find a patient willing to sue.

Sunday, ACLU officials said they are preparing to take legal action against Virginia. "The suit is still far from being ready to be filed," said Judy Goldberg, an ACLU lobbyist. She said 13 persons who were sterilized have asked the ACLU to investigate their cases.

Other state ACLU officials said the group's national office has agreed to help, without charge, with any legal challenges.

Figures obtained from the Social Welfare History Archives at the University of Minnesota and other sources show that by 1963, almost 64,000 sterilizations had been performed on patients at state hospitals for the mentally ill or mentally deficient in 30 states, the Times-Dispatch said.

National totals apparently were no longer kept after 1963, but figures compiled from states strongly sug-

gest the total may now have reached 70,000, the newspaper said.

The newspaper said many of the sterilizations were conducted under

the now-discredited theory that almost all mental illness is hereditary and could be controlled by sterilizing the mentally ill.

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