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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Abandoned Mine Land Emergency Project to Protect Several Homes in Pound from Hazard Caused by Historic Coal Mining**

**Wise County, Va.** – Work is underway in Pound after trees located along a landslide started moving. The area was an active surface mine in the early 1960's and materials from the operation were not placed back properly to prevent erosion. Over time, that material started sliding and water from that site, as well as from a nearby historic underground mine, caused the material to move more, taking trees down with it. Those trees threatened homes, power supply and road access.

The Virginia Department of Energy's (Virginia Energy) Abandoned Mine Land team deemed the site an emergency so removal of those trees could begin right away. Nearly three acres of trees will be cut to not only protect those around them, but to also reduce the weight and stress on the landslide to prevent any further movement.

“We knew we had to act fast on this abandoned mine land hazard. Our team sprang into action getting contractors on site to get these trees out of the way,” said Abandoned Mine Land Project Coordinator Lesa Baker. “Once the project is completed the water from the old deep mine will be diverted in hopes of preventing any more material or water from moving downhill.”

In addition to homes and State Route 826, power lines and power poles with transformers are also located below the slide. This project will make the area safer for those residents and travelers on Vanover Road.

The project will cost \$52,745 to complete and Mcfall Excavating, Inc. is on scene to reclaim the site. The Abandoned Mine Land team will return to the site once this project is complete to reclaim the slide.

Virginia Energy's Abandoned Mine Land program was established after the passing of the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act in 1977. The agency manages a federal grant to reclaim issues caused by coal mining that occurred before that date. Grant funds come from fees paid by the coal industry on each ton of coal mined.

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) became Virginia Energy. The Abandoned Mine Land program now falls under the Mined Land Repurposing program within Virginia Energy.