

## **The application of the Mines and Quarries (Tips) and the Reservoirs Acts**

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**SYNOPSIS.** Correspondence in the technical press over the last thirty years has shown repeated concerns on the part of the reservoir engineering community that tailings dams do not comply with appropriate design and construction standards. This has been accompanied by repeated calls for mine waste disposal facilities to be included in the Register of Large Raised Reservoirs, and thus be covered by the Reservoirs Act rather than fall under the remit of the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act. However, these concerns have been accompanied by a certain amount of confusion amongst academics and Panel Engineers alike as to the application of the UK legislation for tailings management facilities.

This paper presents a personal interpretation of the application of the UK legislation based on more than thirty years' experience of the inspection of reservoirs and tailings dams under both Reservoirs and Mines and Quarries (Tips) legislation. The paper concludes that much of the implied criticism of the Mines and Quarries (Tips) legislation, and of the perceived lower engineering standards applied to mine tips, is ill-founded. It is further evident that any criticism stems both from a lack of knowledge of, and from poor interpretation of, the legislation and that any recent failings in design standards relate more to the approach adopted by individual experts than to any significant deficiencies in the Acts themselves.