deposit of the owner, the waste bank or residue will be regarded as a separate deposit.

[T.D. 6524, 26 FR 147, Jan. 10, 1961, as amended by T.D. 6859, 30 FR 13699, Oct. 28, 1965; T.D. 7261, 38 FR 5467, Mar. 1, 1973]

§ 1.614–2 Election to aggregate separate operating mineral interests under section 614(b) prior to its amendment by Revenue Act of 1964.

(a) *General rule.* (1) The provisions of this section relate to the election, under section 614(b) prior to its amendment by section 226(a) of the Revenue Act of 1964, to aggregate separate operating mineral interests, and, unless otherwise indicated, all references in this section to section 614(b) or any paragraph or subparagraph thereof are references to section 614(b) or a paragraph or subparagraph thereof as it existed prior to such amendment. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, the definitions contained in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section shall apply both before and after such amendment. All references in this section to section 614(d) are references to section 614(d) as it existed prior to its amendment by section 226(b)(3) of the Revenue Act of 1964.

(2) A taxpayer who owns two or more separate operating mineral interests, which constitute part or all of an operating unit, may elect under section 614(b) and this section to form one aggregation of any two or more of such operating mineral interests and to treat such aggregation as one property. Any operating mineral interest which the taxpayer does not elect to include within the aggregation within the time prescribed in paragraph (d) of this section shall be treated as a separate property. The aggregation of separate properties which results from exercising the election shall be considered as one property for all purposes of subtitle A of the Code. The preceding sentence does not preclude the use of more than one account under a single method of computing depreciation or the use of more than one method of computing depreciation under section 167, if otherwise proper. Any reasonable and consistently applied method or methods of computing depreciation of the improvements made with respect to the separate properties aggregated may be continued in accordance with section 167 and the regulations thereunder. Operating interests in different minerals which comprise part or all of the same operating unit may be included in the aggregation. It is not necessary for purposes of the aggregation that the separate operating mineral interests be included in a single tract or parcel of land or in contiguous tracts or parcels of land so long as such interests are a part of the same operating unit. Under section 614(b), a taxpayer cannot elect to form more than one aggregation of separate operating mineral interests within one operating unit. For definitions of *operating mineral interest* and *operating unit* see respectively paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.

(b) *Operating mineral interest defined.* The term *operating mineral interest* means a separate mineral interest as described in section 614(a), in respect of which the costs of production are required to be taken into account by the taxpayer for purposes of computing the limitation of 50 percent of the taxable income from the property in determining the deduction for percentage depletion computed under section 613, or such costs would be so required to be taken into account if the mine, well, or other natural deposit were in the production stage. The term does not include royalty interests or similar interests, such as production payments or net profits interests. For the purpose of determining whether a mineral interest is an operating mineral interest, *costs of production* do not include intangible drilling and development costs, exploration expenditures under section 615, or development expenditures under section 616. Taxes, such as production taxes, payable by holders of nonoperating interests are not considered costs of production for this purpose. A taxpayer may not aggregate operating mineral interests and nonoperating mineral interests such as royalty interests.

(c) *Operating unit defined.* (1) The term *operating unit* refers to the operating mineral interests which are operated together for the purpose of producing minerals. An *operating unit* of a

particular taxpayer must be determined on the basis of his own operations. It is recognized that operating units may not be uniform in the various natural resources industries or in any one of the natural resources industries, such as coal, oil and gas, and the like. As to a particular taxpayer, business reasons may require the formation of operating units that vary in size and content. The term *operating unit* refers to a producing unit, and not to an administrative or sales organization. Among the factors which indicate that mineral interests are operated together as a unit are:

(i) Common field or operating personnel,

(ii) Common supply and maintenance facilities,

(iii) Common processing or treatment plants, and

(iv) Common storage facilities.

However, operating mineral interests which are geographically widespread may not be treated as parts of the same operating unit merely because a single set of accounting records, a single executive organization, or a single sales force is maintained by the taxpayer with respect to such interests, or merely because the products of such interests are processed at the same treatment plant.

(2) If aggregated, an undeveloped operating mineral interest shall be aggregated only with those interests with which it will be operated as a unit when it reaches the production stage.

(3) While a taxpayer may operate an operating mineral interest through an agent, a coowner may aggregate only his operating mineral interests that are actually operated as a unit. For example, if A owned and actually operated the entire working interest in lease X and also owned an undivided fraction of lease Y in which B owned the remaining interest and which B actually operated as a unit with lease Z, A may not aggregate his interest in lease X with his undivided interest in lease Y, since they are not actually operated as a unit.

(4) The determination of the taxpayer as to what constitutes an operating unit is to be accepted unless there is a clear and convincing basis for a change in such determination.

(d) *Manner and scope of election*— (1) *Election; when made.* (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (2)(ii) of this paragraph, the election under section 614(b) and paragraph (a) of this section to treat an mineral interest as part of an aggregation shall be made not later than the time prescribed by law for filing the taxpayer's income tax return (including extensions thereof), for whichever of the following taxable years is the later:

(*a*) The first taxable year beginning after December 31, 1953, and ending after August 16, 1954, or

(*b*) The first taxable year in which any expenditure for exploration, development, or operation in respect of the separate operating mineral interest is made by the taxpayer after the acquisition of such interest.

See, however, paragraph (c) of §1.614–6 as to the binding effect of an election where the basis of a separate operating mineral interest in the hands of the taxpayer is determined by reference to the basis in the hands of a transferor. The election under section 614(b) may not be made with respect to any taxable year beginning after December 31, 1957, except in the case of oil and gas wells. See paragraph (e) of this section for rules with respect to the termination of the election under section 614(b) except in the case of oil and gas wells. If an expenditure has been made in respect of a separate operating mineral interest, it is immaterial whether or not any proven deposit has been discovered with respect to such interest when such expenditure has been made. The provisions of this subdivision may be illustrated by the following example:

Example. Taxpayer A is producing from an oil and gas horizon and in 1958 he drills for the purpose of locating a deeper horizon which will be operated in the same operating unit as the upper producing horizon. At the end of the taxable year 1958 he has expended $50,000 drilling for the purpose of locating a deeper horizon although at such time there is no assurance that such a horizon will be found. If taxpayer A desires to aggregate the deeper horizon, if found, with the upper horizon under section 614(b), he must elect to do so in his return for 1958. If the election to aggregate the upper and lower horizons as one property is made, the drilling expenditures with respect to the prospective lower horizon

must be taken into account along with the income and expenses with respect to the upper producing horizon in computing the depletion allowance on the aggregated property.

However, where expenditures for development of, or production from, a particular mineral deposit result in the discovery of another mineral deposit, the election with respect to such other deposit shall be made for the taxable year in which it is discovered and not for the taxable year in which the expenditures were first made which resulted in such discovery.

(ii) Except in the case of oil and gas wells, if a taxpayer fails to make an election under section 614(b) to aggregate a particular operating mineral interest on or before the time prescribed for the making of such election, such interest will be treated as if an election had been made under section 614(b) to treat it as a separate property and it cannot be included in any aggregation within the operating unit of which it is a part unless the taxpayer obtains the consent of the Commissioner. However, where the taxpayer owns more than one property within an operating unit, but has elected to treat such properties separately and one or more additional operating mineral interests are subsequently acquired, any one or more of the latter may be aggregated with one of the existing separate properties within the operating unit but not with more than one of them since they cannot be validly aggregated with each other.

(iii) In the case of oil and gas wells, if the taxpayer fails to make an election under section 614(b) with respect to a particular operating mineral interest on or before the time prescribed for the making of such election, the taxpayer shall be deemed to have treated such interest under the provisions of section 614(d). See section 614(d) and §1.614–4.

(iv) For purposes of section 614(b), the acquisition of an option to acquire an economic interest in minerals in place does not constitute the acquisition of a mineral interest. Thus, a taxpayer who makes expenditures for the exploration of minerals on a particular tract under an option to acquire an economic interest in minerals in place is not required to make an election with respect to such interest at that time. Furthermore, the election need not be made in the taxable year in which payments are made for the acquisition of a lease, such as the payment of a bonus, unless exploratory, development, or operation expenditures are made thereafter with respect to the property in that year.

(2) *Election; how made.* (i) The election under section 614(b) must be made by a statement attached to the income tax return of the taxpayer for the first taxable year for which the election is made. This statement shall indicate that the taxpayer is making an aggregation of separate operating mineral interests within an operating unit under section 614(b) and shall contain a description of the aggregation and describe the operating mineral interests within the operating unit which are to be treated as separate properties apart from the aggregation. A general description, accompanied by maps appropriately marked, which accurately circumscribes the scope of the aggregation and identifies the properties which are to be treated separately will be sufficient. The statement shall also contain a description of the operating unit in sufficient detail to show that the aggregated operating mineral interests are properly within a single operating unit. See paragraph (c) of this section. The taxpayer shall maintain adequate records and maps in support of the above information. In the event expenditures are first made on an operating mineral interest within an operating unit after an election with respect to the aggregation of interests in that operating unit has been made, the taxpayer shall furnish only information describing such operating mineral interest, its location in the operating unit, and whether it is to be included within the aggregation.

(ii) If the taxpayer made or did not make the election under section 614(b) with respect to a particular operating mineral interest and the last day prescribed by law for filing the return (including extensions of time therefor) on which the election was required to be made falls on or before May 1, 1961, consent is hereby given to the taxpayer to make or change the election not

later than May 1, 1961. Any such election or change of such election shall be effective with respect to the earliest taxable year to which the election is applicable in respect of which assessment of a deficiency or credit or refund of an overpayment, as the case may be, resulting from such election or change is not prevented by any law or rule of law on the date such election or change is made. An election or change of election made pursuant to this subdivision shall be binding upon the taxpayer for the first taxable year for which it is effective and for all subsequent taxable years unless consent to a different treatment is obtained from the Commissioner. (See, however, paragraph (e) of this section for rules relating to the termination and nonapplicability of the election under section 614(b) except in the case of oil and gas wells.) Such election or change shall be made in the form of a statement setting forth the nature of the election or change, including information substantially the same as that required by subdivision (i) of this subparagraph, and shall be accompanied by an amended return or returns if necessary or, if appropriate, a claim for refund or credit. The appropriate documents must be filed on or before May 1, 1961 with the district director for the district in which the original return was filed.

(3) *Election; when effective.* If a taxpayer has elected to aggregate an operating mineral interest, the date on which the aggregation becomes effective is the earliest date within the taxable year affected, on which the taxpayer incurred any expenditure for exploration, development, or operation of such interest. The application of this rule may be illustrated by the following examples:

Example 1. In 1953, a taxpayer owned and operated mineral interests Nos. 1, 2, and 3. All three interests form one operating unit. The taxpayer, who files his return on a calendar year basis, continued to own and operate these interests during the year 1954, and in his return for that year, filed on April 15, 1955, elected to aggregate these three interests. As the result of this election, the aggregation was effective for all purposes of subtitle A of the Code as of January 1, 1954.

Example 2. Assume that, on March 1, 1955, the taxpayer described in example 1 acquired operating mineral interest No. 4 which was also a part of the operating unit composed of operating mineral interests Nos. 1, 2, and 3, that he made his first expenditure for exploration with respect to operating mineral interest No. 4 on September 1, 1955, and that, in his return filed on April 15, 1956, he elected to aggregate operating mineral interest No. 4 with the aggregation consisting of Nos. 1, 2, and 3. As the result of that election, operating mineral interest No. 4 became a part of the aggregation for all purposes of subtitle of the Code on September 1, 1955.

(4) *Election; binding effect.* A valid election made under section 614(b) and this section shall be binding upon the taxpayer for the taxable year for which made and all subsequent taxable years unless consent to make a change is obtained from the Commissioner. However, see paragraph (e) of this section for rules with respect to the termination of the election under section 614(b) except in the case of oil and gas wells. For rules relating to the binding effect of an election where the basis of a separate or an aggregated property in the hands of the transferee is determined by reference to the basis in the hands of the transferor, see paragraph (c) of §1.614–6. A taxpayer can neither include within the aggregation a separate operating mineral interest which he had previously elected to treat separately, nor exclude from the aggregation a separate operating mineral interest previously included therein unless consent to do so is obtained from the Commissioner. A change in tax consequences alone is not sufficient to obtain consent to change the treatment of an operating mineral interest. However, consent may be appropriate where, for example, there has been a substantial change in the taxpayer's operations so that a major part of an aggregation becomes a part of another operating unit. Applications for consent shall be made in writing to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Washington, DC 20224. The application must be accompanied by a statement indicating the reason or reasons for the change and furnishing the information required under subdivision (i) of subparagraph (2) of this paragraph, unless such information has been previously filed and is current.

(5) *Invalid aggregations*—(i) *In general.* In addition to aggregations which are invalid under section 614(b) because of

the failure to make timely elections, aggregations may be invalid under such section in situations which may be divided into two general categories. The first category involves basic aggregations which were timely but otherwise initially invalid. The second category involves invalid additions of operating mineral interests to basic aggregations which additions became subject to the election in years subsequent to the year in which the initial basic aggregation or aggregations were formed.

(ii) *Invalid basic aggregations.* The term *invalid basic aggregations* refers to those aggregations which are initially invalid. Generally, such basic aggregations will be invalid because more than one aggregation has been formed within an operating unit or because operating mineral interests in two or more operating units have been improperly aggregated. For any year in which an invalid basic aggregation exists, each operating mineral interest included in such aggregation shall be treated for all purposes as a separate property unless consent is obtained from the Commissioner to treat any such interest in a different manner. Consent will be granted in appropriate cases as, for example, where the taxpayer demonstrates that he inadvertently formed an invalid basic aggregation. The provisions of this subdivision may be illustrated by the following examples:

Example 1. In 1953, taxpayer A owned six operating mineral interests, designated No. 1 through No. 6, and he continued to own and operate such interests during 1954. He acquired no other operating mineral interests during such year. All six of these operating mineral interests form one operating unit. Assume that A elected under section 614(b) to aggregate operating mineral interests Nos. 1 through 3 into one aggregation and Nos. 4 through 6 into another aggregation. Since A has formed two aggregations in one operating unit, they are invalid basic aggregations. Therefore, interests Nos. 1 through 6 must be treated as separate properties for 1954 and all subsequent taxable years unless consent is obtained from the Commissioner to treat any of such interests in a different manner.

Example 2. Assume the same facts as in example 1 and assume also that, in his return for 1954, A correctly elected to aggregate all six operating mineral interests into one aggregation under section 614(b). Assume further that all these operating mineral interests continued to be in one operating unit for the years 1954, 1955, and 1956 but that, because of changes in the facts and circumstances of A's operations, in 1957 operating mineral interests Nos. 1, 2, and 3 became a part of one operating unit and Nos. 4, 5, and 6 became a part of another operating unit. Notwithstanding the change in operations, the election made by A shall continue to be binding unless consent to change such election is obtained from the Commissioner.

(iii) *Invalid additions.* The term *additions* refers to the additions that a taxpayer makes by electing to aggregate an operating mineral interest with an aggregation formed in a previous year. Such additions will be invalid where the taxpayer either elected to aggregate an operating mineral interest with an invalid basic aggregation or elected to aggregate an operating mineral interest which is part of one operating unit with an aggregation of operating mineral interests which is a part of another operating unit. An operating mineral interest which is invalidly added to either a valid basic aggregation or to an invalid basic aggregation shall be considered as a separate property unless consent is obtained from the Commissioner to treat such interest in a different manner. The following are examples of invalid additions:

Example 1. In 1953, taxpayer A owned six operating mineral interests designated No. 1 through No. 6 and he continued to own and operate such interests during 1954. He acquired no other operating mineral interests during that year. Nos. 1 through 3 formed one operating unit and Nos. 4 through 6 formed another operating unit. In his return for 1954, A incorrectly elected to aggregate all six operating mineral interests into one aggregation under section 614(b). In 1955, A acquired and commenced development of operating mineral interest No. 7 which is correctly a part of the operating unit of which operating mineral interests Nos. 1, 2, and 3 are a part. A elected under section 614(b), for the year 1955, to aggregate operating mineral interest No. 7 with the invalid basic aggregation composed of Nos. 1 through 6. Since operating mineral interest No. 7 was aggregated with an invalid basic aggregation, it is an invalid addition and must be treated as a separate property unless consent is obtained from the Commissioner to treat it in a different manner.

Example 2. In 1953, taxpayer A owned nine operating mineral interests designated No. 1

through No. 9. During 1954, he continued to own and operate such interests and acquired no other operating mineral interest. Interests No. 1 through No. 3 form one operating unit, Nos. 4 through 6 form another operating unit, and Nos. 7 through 9 form a third operating unit. For the year 1954, A elected under section 614(b) to aggregate operating mineral interests Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 into one aggregation, to treat Nos. 5 and 6 as separate properties, and to aggregate Nos. 7, 8, and 9 into another aggregation. Assume that in 1955 A acquired and commenced development of operating mineral interest No. 10 which was a part of the operating unit composed of Nos. 1, 2, and 3. Assume further that he elected under section 614(b) to aggregate No. 10 with the aggregation composed of Nos. 7, 8, and 9. This would be an invalid addition to a valid basic aggregation since operating mineral interest No. 10 was not properly a part of the operating unit formed by Nos. 7, 8, and 9. Therefore, interest No. 10 must be treated as a separate property for 1955 and all subsequent taxable years unless consent is obtained from the Commissioner to treat it in a different manner. However, the valid basic aggregation composed of interests Nos. 7 through 9 is not affected by the invalid addition of interest No. 10.

Example 3. Assume the same facts as in example 2 except that A elected under section 614(b) in 1955 to aggregate No. 10 with the aggregation of Nos. 1 through 4. This would also be an invalid addition because the aggregation composed of Nos. 1 through 4 is an invalid basic aggregation since operating mineral interest No. 4 is not a part of the operating unit consisting of Nos. 1, 2, and 3. Therefore, interest No. 10 must be treated as a separate property for 1955 and all subsequent taxable years unless consent is obtained from the Commissioner to treat such interest in a different manner.

(e) *Termination of election*—(1) *Taxable years beginning after December 31, 1963, in the case of oil and gas wells.* In the case of oil and gas wells, the election provided for under section 614(b) and paragraph (a) of this section to form an aggregation of separate operating mineral interests shall not apply with respect to any taxable year beginning after December 31, 1963. In addition, if a taxpayer treated certain separate operating mineral interests in a single tract or parcel of land as separate rather than as an aggregation and decides to continue such treatment for taxable years beginning after December 31, 1963, he must make an appropriate election under section 614(b) as amended by the Revenue Act of 1964. See § 1.614–8.

(2) *Taxable years beginning after December 31, 1957, in the case of mines.* Except in the case of oil and gas wells, the election provided for under section 614(b) and paragraph (a) of this section to form an aggregation of separate operating mineral interests shall not apply with respect to any taxable year beginning after December 31, 1957. Thus, if a taxpayer makes a binding election under section 614(b) to form an aggregation of separate operating mineral interests within an operating unit for taxable years beginning before January 1, 1958, he must make a new election for the first taxable year beginning after December 31, 1957, under section 614(c) within the time prescribed in § 1.614–3 if he wishes to aggregate any separate operating mineral interests within such operating unit. A new election must be made under section 614(c) notwithstanding the fact that the aggregation formed under section 614(b) would constitute a valid aggregation under section 614(c). Failure to make such an election within the time prescribed shall constitute an election to treat each separate operating mineral interest within the operating unit as a separate property for taxable years beginning after December 31, 1957.

(3) *Taxable years beginning before January 1, 1958, in the case of mines.* An election made under section 614(b) and paragraph (a) of this section to form an aggregation of separate operating mineral interests within a particular operating unit shall not apply with respect to any taxable year beginning prior to January 1, 1958, for which the taxpayer makes an election under section 614(c)(3)(B) and paragraph (f)(2) of § 1.614–3 which is applicable to any separate operating mineral interest within the same operating unit. The provisions of this subparagraph may be illustrated by the following examples:

Example 1. In 1953, taxpayer A owned six separate operating mineral interests, designated No. 1 through No. 6, which he operated as a unit. Operating mineral interests Nos. 1 through 5 comprise a mine, and operating mineral interest No. 6 represents one mineral deposit in a single tract of land which is being extracted by means of two mines. Taxpayer A previously made a binding election under section 614(b) to aggregate operating mineral interests Nos. 1 through 5

and to treat operating mineral interest No. 6 as a separate property. Under section 614(c)(2) and (3)(B) taxpayer A makes an election which is applicable for the taxable year 1954 and all subsequent taxable years to treat operating mineral interest No. 6 as two separate operating mineral interests. Therefore, the previous election of taxpayer A to aggregate operating mineral interests Nos. 1 through 5 under section 614(b) does not apply. Unless taxpayer A also makes an election to aggregate operating mineral interests Nos. 1 through 5 as one property under section 614(c)(1) and (3)(B) within the time prescribed in paragraph (f)(2) of §1.614–3, he shall be deemed to have made an election to treat each of such interests as a separate property for 1954 and all subsequent taxable years.

Example 2. In 1953, taxpayer B owned six separate operating mineral interests, designated No. 1 through No. 6, which he operated as a unit. Operating mineral interests Nos. 1 through 3 comprise a mine and Nos. 4 through 6 comprise a second mine. Taxpayer B previously made a binding election under section 614(b) to aggregate operating mineral interests Nos. 1 through 8 and to treat Nos. 4 through 6 as separate properties. Under section 614(c) (1) and (3)(B) taxpayer B makes an election which is applicable for the taxable year 1954 and all subsequent taxable years to aggregate operating mineral interests Nos. 4 through 6 as one property. The previous election of the taxpayer under section 614(b) to aggregate operating mineral interests Nos. 1 through 3 does not apply even though such aggregation would constitute a valid aggregation if formed under section 614(c)(1). Therefore, if taxpayer B wishes to continue to treat operating mineral interests Nos. 1 through 3 as one property, he must also make an election to do so under section 614(c) (1) and (3)(B) within the time prescribed in paragraph (f)(2) of §1.614–3.

(4) *Bases of separate operating mineral interests.* If an aggregation formed under section 614(b) is terminated by reason of the provisions of section 614(b)(4)(A), is terminated under section 614(b)(4)(B) for any taxable year after the first taxable year to which the election under section 614(b) applies, or is terminated by reason of the provisions of section 614(b) as amended by the Revenue Act of 1964, the bases of the separate operating mineral interests (and combinations thereof) included in such aggregation shall be determined in accordance with the rules contained in paragraph (a)(2) of §1.614–6 as of the first day of the first taxable year for which the termination is effective. However, if by reason of the provisions of section 614(b)(4)(B), an election to aggregate under section 614(b) does not apply for any taxable year for which such election was made, the bases of the separate operating mineral interests included in the aggregation formed under section 614(b) shall be determined without regard to the election under section 614(b).

(f) *Alternative treatment of separate operating mineral interests in the case of oil and gas wells.* For rules relating to an alternative treatment of separate operating mineral interests in the case of oil and gas wells, see §1.614–4.

[T.D. 6524, 26 FR 147, Jan. 10, 1961, as amended by T.D. 6859, 30 FR 13700, Oct. 28, 1965]

§1.614–3 Rules relating to separate operating mineral interests in the case of mines.

(a) *Election to aggregate separate operating mineral interests*—(1) *General rule.* Except in the case of oil and gas wells, a taxpayer who owns two or more separate operating mineral interests, which constitute part or all of the same operating unit, may elect under section 614(c)(1) and this paragraph to form an aggregation of all such operating mineral interests which comprise any one mine or any two or more mines and to treat such aggregation as one property. The aggregated property which results from the exercise of such election shall be considered as one property for all purposes of subtitle A of the Code. The preceding sentence does not preclude the use of more than one account under a single method of computing depreciation or the use of more than one method of computing depreciation under section 167, if otherwise proper. Any reasonable and consistently applied method or methods of computing depreciation of the improvements made with respect to the separate properties aggregated may be continued in accordance with section 167 and the regulations thereunder. It is not necessary for purposes of the aggregation that the separate operating mineral interests be included in a single tract or parcel of land or in contiguous tracts or parcels of land so long as such interests constitute part or all of the same operating unit. A taxpayer may elect to form more than one aggregation of