

(2) Section 615 is not applicable to expenditures which are reflected in improvements subject to allowances for depreciation under sections 167 and 611. However, allowances for depreciation of such improvements which are used in the exploration of ores or minerals are considered exploration expenditures under section 615. If such improvements are used only in part for exploration during a taxable year, an allocable portion of the allowance for depreciation shall be treated as an exploration expenditure.

(3) Section 615 is applicable to exploration expenditures paid or incurred by a taxpayer in connection with the acquisition of a fractional share of the working or operating interest to the extent of the fractional interest so acquired by the taxpayer. The expenditures attributable to the remaining fractional share shall be considered as the cost of his acquired interest and shall be recovered through depletion allowances. For example, taxpayer A owns mineral leases on unexplored mineral lands and agrees to convey an undivided three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) interest in such leases to taxpayer B provided B will pay all of the exploration expenditures for ascertaining the existence, location, extent, or quality of any deposit of ore or other mineral which will be incurred before the beginning of the development stage. B shall treat three-fourths of such amount under section 615, and shall treat one-fourth of such amount as part of the cost of his interest, recoverable through depletion.

(4) The provisions of section 615 do not apply to costs of exploration which are reflected in the amount which the taxpayer paid or incurred to acquire the property. Such provisions apply only to costs paid or incurred by the taxpayer for exploration undertaken directly or through a contract by the taxpayer. See, however, sections 381(a) and 381(c) (10) for special rules with respect to deferred exploration expenditures in certain corporate acquisitions.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11737, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 7192, 37 FR 12938, June 30, 1972]

§ 1.615-2 Deduction of pre-1970 exploration expenditures in the year paid or incurred.

(a) *In general.* (1) If the election to treat exploration expenditures under section 615 has been made or is deemed made under § 1.615-6(b) subject to the total limitation of \$100,000, a taxpayer who has made exploration expenditures prior to January 1, 1970, with respect to more than one mine or other natural deposit may deduct for a taxable year for which such election is effective any portion of such expenditures attributable to each mine or deposit. With respect to a particular mine or other natural deposit, a taxpayer who has made the election described in the preceding sentence may deduct under section 615(a) a portion of the exploration expenditures and may defer and deduct under section 615(b) the balance of such expenditures. For any taxable year for which the election to treat exploration expenditures under section 615 is effective, the taxpayer must charge any amount of exploration expenditures in excess of \$100,000 to capital account and must charge to capital account whatever amount has not been deducted currently or deferred. For example, taxpayer A who has elected under section 615(e) has three mines, X, Y, and Z. In the taxable year 1967, A makes exploration expenditures of \$75,000 with respect to each mine. The total allowable deduction for exploration expenditures is \$100,000. A deducts \$50,000 and defers \$25,000 with respect to X. He deducts \$25,000, and charges to capital account \$50,000 with respect to Y, and charges to capital account the entire \$75,000 paid with respect to Z. Thus, A has deducted or deferred \$100,000 and capitalized the excess.

(2) Except as provided in section 615(e) and § 1.615-6, a taxpayer cannot change his treatment of exploration expenditures for a taxable year after the due date (including extensions of time) for filing the return for the taxable year except where it is subsequently determined that any part of such exploration expenditures deducted under section 615(a) or deferred under section 615(b) are not exploration expenditures for the taxable year. Where the taxpayer has made the election to treat

exploration expenditures under section 615 and it is subsequently determined that part of the expenditures deducted under section 615(a) or deferred under section 615(b), for a taxable year, were not exploration expenditures for such taxable year, the exploration expenditures required to be charged to capital account for such taxable year by reason of the limitation may be deducted or deferred (to the extent of the subsequent determination) and proper adjustment made to capital account. A taxpayer claiming a deduction under section 615(a) shall indicate clearly on his income tax return the amount of the deduction claimed under such section with respect to each mine or other natural deposit. Such mine or deposit shall be identified by an adequate description.

[T.D. 7192, 37 FR 12938, June 30, 1972]

§ 1.615-3 Election to defer pre-1970 exploration expenditures.

(a) *General rule.* A taxpayer who makes the election provided in section 615(e) may defer any portion of the exploration expenditures made before January 1, 1970, with respect to each mine or other natural deposit, subject to the limitations described in section 615(c) and § 1.615-4. The amounts so deferred shall be deducted ratably as the units of produced ores or minerals discovered or explored by reason of such expenditures are sold.

(b) *Effect and manner of making election.* (1) The election to defer exploration expenditures shall apply only to expenditures for the taxable year for which made. However, once made, the election shall be binding with respect to the expenditures for that taxable year. Thus, a taxpayer cannot revoke his election for any reason whatsoever.

(2) The election shall be made for each mine or other natural deposit by a clear indication on the return or by a statement filed with the district director with whom the return was filed, not later than the time prescribed by law for filing such return (including extensions thereof) for the taxable year to which such election is applicable.

(c) *Expenditures made by the owner who retains a non-operating mineral interest.* (1) A taxpayer who elects to defer exploration expenditures and

thereafter transfers his interest in the mine or other natural deposit, retaining an economic interest therein, shall deduct an amount attributable to such interest on a pro rata basis as the interest pays out. For example, a taxpayer who defers exploration expenditures and then leases his deposit, retaining a royalty interest therein, shall deduct the deferred expenditures ratably as he receives royalties. If the taxpayer receives a bonus or advanced royalties in connection with the transfer of his interest, he shall deduct deferred expenditures allocable to such bonus or advanced royalties in an amount which is in the same proportion to the total of such costs as the bonus or advanced royalties bears to the bonus and total royalties expected to be received. Also, in the case of a transfer of a mine or other natural deposit by a taxpayer who retains a production payment therein, he shall deduct the exploration expenditures ratably over the payments expected to be received.

(2) Where a taxpayer receives an amount, in addition to retaining an economic interest, which amount is treated as from the sale or exchange of a capital asset or property treated under section 1231 (except coal or iron ore to which section 631(c) applies), the deferred exploration expenditures shall be allocated between the interest sold and the interest retained in proportion to the fair market values of each interest as of the date of sale. The amount allocated to the interest sold may not be deducted, but shall be a part of the basis of such interest.

(d) *Losses from abandonment.* Section 165 and the regulations thereunder contain general rules relating to the treatment of losses resulting from abandonment.

(e) *Computation of amount of deduction.* The amount of the deduction allowable during the taxable year is an amount A, which bears the same ratio to B (the total deferred exploration expenditures for a particular mine or other natural deposit reduced by the amount of such expenditures deducted in prior taxable years) as C (the number of units of the ore or mineral benefited by such expenditures sold during