

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

the taxable year) bears to D (the number of units of ore or mineral benefited by such expenditures remaining as of the taxable year). For the purposes of this proportion, the *number of units of ore or mineral benefited by such expenditures remaining as of the taxable year* is the number of units of ore or mineral benefited by the deferred exploration expenditures remaining at the end of the year to be recovered from the mine or other natural deposit (including units benefited by such expenditures recovered but not sold) plus the number of units benefited by such expenditures sold within the taxable year. The principles outlined in § 1.611-2 are applicable in estimating the number of units remaining as of the taxable year and the number of units sold during the taxable year. The estimate is subject to revision in accordance with that section in the event it is ascertained from any source, such as operations or development work, that the remaining units are materially greater or less than the number of units remaining from a prior estimate.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11737, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 6685, 28 FR 11405, Oct. 24, 1963; T.D. 6841, 30 FR 9306, July 27, 1965; T.D. 7192, 37 FR 12939, June 30, 1972]

§ 1.615-4 Limitation of amount deductible.

(a) *Taxable years beginning before July 7, 1960.* For any taxable year beginning before July 7, 1960 (including taxable years of less than 12 months), a taxpayer may deduct or defer exploration expenditures paid or incurred in the taxable year in an amount not in excess of \$100,000. However, for such taxable years, the taxpayer may not avail himself of the provisions of section 615 for more than four taxable years (including taxable years of less than 12 months and taxable years subject to the Internal Revenue Code of 1939). Such four taxable years need not be consecutive. In determining the number of years in which a taxpayer has availed himself of section 615, a year for which he makes an election to defer exploration expenditures shall count as one year. Any subsequent taxable year in which such deferred expenditures are

deducted shall not be taken into account as one of the four years. For purposes of the 4-year limitation, a year in which both a deduction and an election to defer are availed of by the taxpayer shall be taken into account as only one year.

(b) *Taxable years beginning after July 6, 1960.* For any taxable year beginning after July 6, 1960 (including taxable years of less than 12 months), a taxpayer who is otherwise eligible may deduct or defer exploration expenditures paid or incurred before January 1, 1970, in the lesser of the following amounts:

- (1) The amount paid or incurred in the taxable year,
- (2) \$100,000, or
- (3) \$400,000 minus all amounts deducted or deferred for taxable years ending after December 31, 1950.

For purposes of this paragraph, the number of taxable years for which the taxpayer availed himself of the provisions of section 615 or the corresponding provisions of prior law is immaterial.

(c) *Special rules for previously deferred expenditures.* In determining whether an election to defer was availed of in applying the limitations of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, there shall be taken into account any year with respect to which amounts were deferred but not fully deducted because of a sale or other disposition of the mineral property, even though the balance of the deferred amounts was treated as part of the basis of the mineral property in determining gain or loss from the sale.

(d) *Example of application of provisions.* The application of the provisions of subparagraphs (a) and (b) of this section may be illustrated by the following example:

Example. A taxpayer on the calendar year basis, who has never claimed the benefits of section 615, or section 23(ff) of the 1939 Code, expended \$200,000 for exploration expenditures during the year 1956. For each of the years 1957, 1958, 1959, and 1960 the taxpayer had exploration costs of \$80,000. The taxpayer deducted or deferred the maximum amounts allowed for each of the years 1956,