

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2023 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 3307**

By Delegates Hanshaw (Mr. Speaker), Street,  
Zatezalo, Ward, Fluharty, Phillips, McGeehan and  
Howell

[Introduced February 07, 2023; Referred to the  
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article,  
2 designated §29-36-1, §29-36-2, §29-36-3, §29-36-4, §29-36-5, §29-36-6, and §29-36-7;  
3 all relating to establishing the West Virginia-Ireland Trade Commission; proposing findings;  
4 providing for the composition of the Commission, appointment of members and filling of  
5 vacancies; providing for compensation of the Commission members; its meetings,  
6 selection of a chair, maintenance of records and what constitutes a quorum; delineating  
7 the purpose of the Commission; prescribing reports be generated by Commission;  
8 providing for acceptance of funds by Commission; and providing an effective date.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 36. WEST VIRGINIA-IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION.**

**§29-36-1. Findings.**

1 Findings—the Legislature finds that:  
2 Over 15 percent of West Virginia’s population is of Irish descent, which, according to the  
3 Irish diplomat Barbara Jones, represents a higher figure than that in Boston or New York City;  
4 The ties that bind Ireland to West Virginia are deep and lasting, reflected on West Virginia’s  
5 map from Ireland to Irish Mountain, from Tyrone to Tralee; and  
6 Irish heritage has been the fortunate lot of many great West Virginians, such as  
7 philanthropist Bernard P. McDonough, the inventor Michael Owens, and US Senator John Kenna;  
8 Ireland and West Virginia are attempting to reinvent their economies for success in the  
9 Twenty-first century; and  
10 West Virginians have both historic and practical reasons to desire the building of firmer  
11 commercial links with Ireland.

**§29-36-2. Establishment of commission; Composition; Appointments; Vacancies.**

1 For these and other reasons, there is hereby established the West Virginia-Ireland Trade  
2 Commission. The commission shall consist of 9 members, to be appointed as follows:

3           (a) Two members of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the President of the Senate,  
4 and they shall have current or past involvement in organizations that promote Irish affairs or shall  
5 have interest in the well-being of trade relations between West Virginia and Ireland; and two  
6 members of the House of Delegates, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
7 Delegates, and they shall have current or past involvement in organizations that promote Irish  
8 affairs or shall have interest in the well-being of trade relations between West Virginia and Ireland.  
9 The legislative members of the commission shall serve during the two-year legislative term in  
10 which the appointments are made.

11           (b) Five members of the commission shall be appointed by the Governor, with the advice  
12 and consent of the Senate and shall serve for a term of four years. The members thus appointed  
13 shall include at least one representative from: a public institution of higher education; the West  
14 Virginia Chamber of Commerce, or its successor organization; and at least two public members  
15 shall represent Irish American communities or interest, neither of whom shall be members of the  
16 same political party.

17           (c) All appointments shall be made no later than July 1, 2023. A vacancy in the  
18 membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was  
19 made.

**§29-36-3. Compensation; Meetings; Chair; Records; Quorum.**

1           (a) Members of the commission shall receive the same compensation authorized by law  
2 for members of the Legislature for the interim duties for each day, or portion thereof, the member is  
3 engaged in the discharge of official duties. All members shall be reimbursed for their actual and  
4 necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of official duties, except that mileage shall be  
5 reimbursed at the same rate as that authorized for members of the Legislature.

6           (b) (1) The commission shall meet and hold hearings at the places it designates throughout  
7 the State.

8           (2) The commission shall elect a chair from amongst its members. The chair may appoint  
9 from among the commission members subcommittees and subcommittee chairs at their  
10 discretion.

11           (c) The commission shall keep records of all of its proceedings which shall be public and  
12 open to inspection, shall adopt a seal, and shall exercise and perform the duties prescribed by this  
13 section.

14           (d) A majority of the members of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the  
15 transaction of the business of the commission.

**§29-36-4. Purpose of Commission.**

1           The purpose of the West Virginia-Ireland Trade Commission shall be to:

- 2           (1) Advance bilateral trade and investment between West Virginia and Ireland;
- 3           (2) Initiate joint action on policy issues of mutual interest to West Virginia and Ireland;
- 4           (3) Promote business and academic exchanges between West Virginia and Ireland;
- 5           (4) Encourage mutual economic support between West Virginia and Ireland;
- 6           (5) Encourage mutual investment in the infrastructure of West Virginia and Ireland; and
- 7           (6) Address such other issues as determined by the Commission.

**§29-36-5. Reports**

1           The commission shall report its findings, results, and recommendations to the Governor,  
2 and the Legislature, within one year of its initial organizational meeting and by February 1st of  
3 each succeeding year for the activities of the preceding calendar year. The report shall be in  
4 writing and include recommendations as deemed appropriate by the commission to effectuate its  
5 purpose, as provided by this section.

**§29-36-6. Funds.**

1           The West Virginia-Ireland Trade Commission shall be authorized to raise funds, through  
2 direct solicitation or other fundraising events, alone, or with other groups, and accept gifts, grants,  
3 and bequests from individuals, corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and public and

4 private organizations and institutions, to defray the commission's administrative expenses and to  
5 carry \_\_\_\_\_ out \_\_\_\_\_ its \_\_\_\_\_ purposes.

**§29-36-7. Effective Date.**

1 This act shall take effect March 17, 2023.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the West-Virginia Ireland Trade Commission. The bill proposes findings. The bill provides for the composition of the Commission, appointment of members and filling of vacancies. The bill provides for compensation of the Commission members, its meetings, selection of a chair, maintenance of records and what constitutes a quorum. The bill delineates the purpose of the Commission. The bill prescribes reports be generated by Commission. The bill provides for acceptance of funds by the Commission. Finally, the bill provides an effective date.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.