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COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

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FOR

Senate Bill No. 622

(SENATORS MCCABE, FOSTER, HUNTER, KESSLER, BARNES AND OLIVERIO, original sponsors)

[Passed March 8, 2008; in effect ninety days from passage.]



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AN ACT to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article, designated §5B-2G-1, §5B-2G-2, §5B-2G-3, §5B-2G-4, §5B-2G-5, §5B-2G-6, §5B-2G-7, §5B-2G-8 and §5B-2G-9; and to amend and reenact §59-1-10 of said code, all relating generally to the Voluntary Rural and Outdoor Heritage Conservation Act; establishing Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund; board of trustees created; findings; definitions; duties; authorizing issuance of bonds;

increasing certain recording fees; and dedicating a portion of the increase to the Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended by adding thereto a new article, designated §5B-2G-1, §5B-2G-2, §5B-2G-3, §5B-2G-4, §5B-2G-5, §5B-2G-6, §5B-2G-7, §5B-2G-8 and §5B-2G-9; and that §59-1-10 of said code be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:

CHAPTER 5B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1985.

ARTICLE 2G. LAND CONSERVATION.

§5B-2G-1. Short title.

- 1 This article shall be known as the Voluntary Rural
- 2 and Outdoor Heritage Conservation Act.

§5B-2G-2. Legislative findings and purpose.

- 1 Legislative findings and purpose:
- 2 (a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that:

3 (1) The State of West Virginia's rural character,
4 natural wonders, scenic beauty and recreational
5 opportunities combine to create an exceptional quality
6 of life for its citizens;

7 (2) West Virginia's landscapes serve as an economic
8 engine supporting vibrant forest products, agricultural,
9 hunting and fishing and tourism industries;

(3) West Virginia's unique and important lands are
key to attracting new businesses and knowledge
workers who are mobile and capable of doing business
anywhere and critical to diversifying the economy of the
State of West Virginia;

15 (4) West Virginia's unique and important lands
provide all West Virginians hunting, fishing, rafting,
hiking and other recreational opportunities important
to their health and well-being;

(5) West Virginia's unique and important lands are
critical to the continued health of the state's wildlife
habitats and West Virginia's Wildlife Conservation
Action Plan, mandated by the United States Congress,
recognizes that habitat loss is a key issue confronting
conservation of the state's valuable fish and wildlife
resources;

26 (6) The conversion of rural land to developed land in
27 West Virginia doubled between 1982 and 1997;

(7) There is a critical need to invest in the
conservation of unique and important wildlife habitat,
natural areas, forest lands, farmland and lands for
hunting, fishing and recreation; and

32 (8) It is critical to encourage cooperation and
33 innovative public-partnerships among landowners,
34 state agencies, nonprofit organizations and others
35 which must work together in order to conserve West
36 Virginia's most important unique and rural lands.

37 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide
38 persons and other entities an opportunity to voluntarily
39 conserve land.

40 (c) Further, it is the intent of the Legislature to
41 establish a West Virginia Outdoor Heritage
42 Conservation Fund, hereinafter "fund", to establish an
43 ongoing funding source to conserve unique and
44 important wildlife habitat, natural areas, forests,
45 working lands, lands for hunting, fishing and recreation
46 and other lands important to West Virginians.

47 (d) The Legislature finds that an ongoing funding
48 source to conserve unique and important lands will help
49 to ensure that present and future generations of West
50 Virginians are able to enjoy the economic, quality of

51 life, health, recreational, scenic and other benefits of

52 conserved lands.

§5B-2G-3. West Virginia Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund - Established.

1 The West Virginia Outdoor Heritage Conservation

2 Fund is established within the Department of

- 3 Commerce. The fund has the powers and duties
- 4 provided in this article.

§5B-2G-4. West Virginia Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund - Board of trustees.

1 (a) Composition; chairman; quorum; qualifications. — 2 The fund shall be governed and administered by a 3 board of trustees composed of the Director of the Division of Natural Resources and the Director of the 4 5 Division of Forestry, who shall serve as voting ex officio 6 members, and nine voting members to be appointed by 7 the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the 8 Senate. The ex officio members may appoint designees to serve on the board of trustees. One of the appointed 9 members shall be a representative of the West Virginia 10 11 Agricultural Land Protection Authority; one of the appointed members shall be a registered forester; three 12 13 of the appointed members shall be representatives of 14 independent IRC 501(c)(3) land trusts; two of the 15 appointed members shall be recognized professional 16 experts in biology or ecology nominated by the West 17 Virginia Academy of Sciences; one of the appointed 18 members shall have demonstrated expertise in public 19 health or public recreation; and one of the appointed 20 members shall be a representative of sportsmen and sportswomen. A concerted effort shall be made to 21 22 appoint members who represent a cross-section of the state. 23

The board shall elect the chair and other officers as necessary from among the nine appointed members. A majority of the members of the board serving at any one time constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

If any of the entities to be represented on the board
under this section ceases to exist, the Governor shall
appoint a representative with similar expertise from an
entity with a similar mission.

33 (b) Terms. —

34 (1) The Governor, with the advice and consent of the
35 Senate, shall appoint the nine members for the
36 following terms:

- 37 (A) Three for a term of four years;
- 38 (B) Three for a term of three years; and
- 39 (C) Three for a term of two years.

40 (2) Successors to appointed members whose terms
41 expire shall be appointed for terms of four years.
42 Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term. An
43 appointed member may not serve more than two
44 successive terms. Appointment to fill a vacancy may
45 not be considered as one of two terms.

46 (c) Oath. —

47 Appointed members shall take the oath of office as 48 prescribed by law.

49 (d) *Recusal.* —

A board member shall recuse himself or herself from
any vote in which he or she has a conflict of interest.
The provisions of this subsection is in addition to any
other provisions of law or applicable rules relating to
the ethics of public officers or employees.

55 (e) Compensation and expenses. —

56 Members shall not receive compensation. Each 57 member of the board shall receive expense 58 reimbursement from the fund for actual reasonable and 59 necessary expenses incurred while engaged in the

- 60 discharge of official duties, the actual expenses not to
- 61 exceed the amount paid for similar reimbursement to
- 62 members of the Legislature.

§5B-2G-5. West Virginia Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund - Powers.

- The board has the following general powers on behalf
 of the fund:
- 3 (a) Power to sue. To sue and be sued in contractual
 4 matters in its own name.
- 5 (b) *Power to contract.* To enter into contracts 6 generally and to execute all instruments necessary or 7 appropriate to carry out its purposes.
- 8 (c) Power to conserve land. To acquire interests in
 9 real property for conservation purposes.
- 10 (d) Power to transfer. To transfer interests in real
 11 property for conservation purposes.
- (e) Power to disburse grants. To act as a granting
 authority to award grants to eligible grant recipients in
 accordance with section nine of this article.
- (f) Power to seek funding. To apply for and receive
 funding from any and all state, federal and private
 sources to be used as provided in this chapter.
- 18 (g) Power to authorize bond issuance. — To direct the 19 Economic Development Authority to issue revenue. bonds payable from the portion of the recording fee 20 21 imposed in section ten, article one, chapter fifty-nine of 22 this code to be allocated to the fund and any other 23 special revenue made against to the fund for this 24 purpose in accordance with section eight of this article 25 or other provisions of this code.

§5B-2G-6. West Virginia Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund - Duties.

- 1 The board shall, on behalf of the fund:
- 2 (a) Disseminate information regarding land3 conservation and promote the conservation of land.
- 4 (b) Develop and implement additional guidelines and
 5 procedures, consistent with the purposes of this chapter,
 6 as necessary to implement this chapter.
- 7 (c) Seek and apply for funds from federal, state and
 8 private sources to carry out its purpose as provided in
 9 this chapter.
- (d) From moneys received from the recording fee in
 accordance with section ten, article one, chapter
 fifty-nine of this code, to:
- 13 (1) Make available to the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources fifty percent of the moneys so 14 received by the fund, for the division to acquire 15 interests in real property for conservation purposes in 16 17 perpetuity in keeping with the West Virginia Wildlife 18 Conservation Action Plan or other conservation plans 19 developed by the division, provided that the board 20 approves any acquisitions. The division may agree to 21 permit the fund to retain any or all of this fifty percent 22 to remain in the fund to be used as payment of debt 23 service and other costs associated with revenue bonds 24 on the fund's behalf by the Economic Development 25 Authority in accordance with the provisions of this 26 article:
- 27 (2) Ensure that the remaining fifty percent of the 28 moneys so received by the fund are used for competitive 29 grants in accordance with this article or used as 30 payment of debt service and other costs associated with 31 revenue bonds on the fund's behalf by the Economic Development Authority in accordance with the 32 33 provisions of this article, the proceeds of which shall also be used for competitive grants. 34
- 35 (e) Prepare and file electronically with the Governor's36 office and with the Legislature by the thirty-first day of

August of each year a report that accounts for fund receipts and disbursals and sets forth a list and description of all grants approved and all acquisitions of interests in real property obtained with moneys from the fund during the current year, including the recipients of the grants, the amounts and the public benefits of the interests in real property acquired.

(f) Propose legislative rules in accordance with the
provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this
code to carry out its purposes and programs, to include
specifically the qualifications and procedures relating
to its awarding of grants.

§5B-2G-7. Definitions.

- For purposes of this article, the following terms have
 the meanings set forth in this section.
- 3 (a) "Board" means the board of trustees established in
 4 section three of this article.
- 5 (b) "Conservation easement" means a nonpossessory 6 interest in real property as defined in section three, 7 article twelve, chapter twenty of this code, except that 8 a conservation easement acquired pursuant to this 9 article shall be held in perpetuity.

10 (c) "Conservation purposes" means the conservation 11 of land for outdoor recreation by the public, for 12 conservation of natural plant and wildlife habitat or 13 similar ecosystem, for conservation of forestland and 14 other open spaces, for conservation of land of historical 15 or cultural significance or as further defined under 16 conservation criteria developed in this article.

- 17 (d) "Eligible grant recipient" means:
- 18 (1) The following state agencies:
- 19 (A) Division of Natural Resources;
- 20 (B) Division of Forestry; or

21 (2) A charitable corporation, charitable association or charitable trust registered with the Secretary of State 22 and exempt from taxation pursuant to Section 501(c)(3)23 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 [Public Law 99-514, 26 U. S. C.§501(c)(3)] or other federal or state 25 statutes or rules, the purposes or powers of which 26 27 include retaining or protecting the natural, scenic, 28 agricultural or open-space values of real property; 29 assuring the availability of real property for 30 agricultural, forest, recreational or open-space use; protecting natural resources and wildlife; maintaining 31 32 or enhancing land, air or water quality; or preserving the historical, architectural, archaeological or cultural 33 aspects of real property, as defined in section three, 34 article twelve, chapter twenty of this code, and that has 35 36 a primary part of its mission to acquire interests in real 37 property for conservation purposes.

38 (e) "Fund" means the West Virginia Outdoor Heritage39 Conservation Fund established in this article.

40 (f) "Land conservation" means acquisition of interests
41 in real property from willing sellers for conservation
42 purposes.

43 (g) "Stewardship" means the necessary monitoring,
44 maintenance, and enforcement of interests in real
45 property for conservation purposes.

§5B-2G-8. Funding of land conservation; issuance of revenue bonds.

1 (a) Fund. —

2 (1) Created. — The West Virginia Outdoor Heritage
3 Conservation Fund is created for the purposes specified

4 in this article.

5 (2) Sources. — The West Virginia Outdoor Heritage
6 Conservation Fund is comprised of:

7 (A) Any money made available to the fund by general8 or special fund appropriations;

9 (B) Any money made available to the fund by grants 10 or transfers from governmental or private sources; (C) Any money realized by investments, interest, 11 12 dividends or distributions; and 13 (D) Any money received from the issuance of revenue bonds in accordance with the provisions of this article; 14 15 and 16 (3) Disbursements. — The Treasurer may not disburse 17 any money from the fund other than: 18 (A) For costs associated with the staffing, 19 administration, and technical and legal duties of the 20 fund; 21 (B) For reasonable and necessary expenses incurred 22 by the members of the board of trustees of the fund in 23 the performance of official duties; 24 (C) For costs associated with the acquisition of 25 interests in real property for conservation purposes and 26 for costs associated with stewardship authorized by this 27 article; 28 (D) For grants to be awarded in accordance with section nine of this article. 29 30 (E) For payment of debt service and other costs 31 associated with revenue bonds issued on the fund's 32 behalf by the Economic Development Authority; and 33 (F) Of revenue received, directly or indirectly, from the recording fee under section ten, article one, chapter 34 fifty-nine of this code and not used for the payment of 35 36 revenue bonds and expenses associated therewith, for purposes consistent with the duties of the fund set forth 37 38 in this article.

39 (4) Money remaining at end of fiscal year. — Any
40 money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year
41 shall not revert to the General Revenue Fund of the

42 state, but shall remain in the fund to be used for the43 purposes specified in this article.

44 (5) Budget. — The estimated budget of the fund for
45 the next fiscal year shall be included with the budget of
46 the West Virginia Department of Commerce.

47 (6) Audit. — The fund shall be audited annually.

48 (b) Bonds. —

49 The Legislature finds and declares that in order to 50 attract new business, commerce and industry to this 51 state, to retain existing business and industry providing 52 the citizens of this state with economic security and to 53 advance the business prosperity of this state and the economic welfare of the citizens of this state, it is 54 necessary to provide public financial support for land 55 56 conservation as provided in this article.

57 (1) The West Virginia Economic Development 58 Authority created and provided in article fifteen, 59 chapter thirty-one of this code shall, by resolution, in 60 accordance with the provisions of this article and article 61 fifteen, chapter thirty-one of this code and upon 62 direction of the board of the Outdoor Heritage 63 Conservation Fund, issue revenue bonds of the 64 Economic Development Authority to pay for all or a 65 portion of the cost of the acquisition of interests in real 66 property for conservation purposes authorized under 67 this article or to refund the bonds at the discretion of the fund. The revenue bonds shall mature at a time or 68 69 times not exceeding thirty years from their respective 70 dates. The principal of, and the interest and redemption 71 premium, if any, on the bonds shall be payable from the 72 moneys deposited in the fund pursuant to section ten, 73 article one, chapter fifty-nine of this code or from other 74 sources identified by the board of the fund.

(2) There is established in the State Treasury a special
revenue fund named the Outdoor Heritage Conservation
Fund into which shall be deposited on and after the first
day of July, two thousand eight, the amounts to be

79 deposited in the fund as specified in this article. The 80 Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund shall consist of all 81 such moneys, all appropriations to the fund, all interest 82 earned from investment of the fund and any gifts, 83 grants or contributions received by the fund. All 84 amounts deposited in the fund pursuant to section ten, 85 article one, chapter fifty-nine of this code shall be 86 pledged to the repayment of the principal, interest and 87 redemption premium, if any, on any revenue bonds or 88 refunding revenue bonds authorized by this section, 89 including any and all commercially customary and 90 reasonable costs and expenses which may be incurred 91 in connection with the issuance, refunding, redemption 92 or defeasance thereof. The West Virginia Economic 93 Development Authority may further provide in the 94 resolution and in the trust agreement for priorities on 95 the revenues paid into the Outdoor Heritage 96 Conservation Fund pursuant to section ten, article one, 97 chapter fifty-nine of this code as may be necessary for 98 the protection of the prior rights of the holders of bonds 99 issued at different times under the provisions of this 100 section. The bonds issued pursuant to this subsection 101 shall be separate from all other bonds which may be or 102 have been issued from time to time under the provisions 103 of this article.

104 (3) Bonds issued under this subsection shall state on 105 their face that the bonds do not constitute a debt of the 106 State of West Virginia; that payment of the bonds, 107 interest and charges thereon cannot become an 108 obligation of the State of West Virginia; and that the bondholders' remedies are limited in all respects to the 109 110 special revenue fund established in this subsection for 111 the liquidation of the bonds.

112 (4) The West Virginia Economic Development 113 Authority shall expend the bond proceeds from the 114 revenue bond issues authorized and directed by this 115 section for projects as certified by the board of the fund 116 under the provisions of this article as serving a public 117 purpose and meeting the criteria established by this 118 article.

(5) If any proceeds from sale of bonds remain after
paying costs and making grants as provided in this
subsection, the surplus may be used as elsewhere
provided in this article.

§5B-2G-9. Grants for land conservation; application; criteria.

(a) An eligible grant recipient may apply for a grant
from the fund to acquire interests in real property for
conservation purposes or for stewardship. An
application may not be submitted to the fund without
the written consent of the owner of the interest in real
property identified in the application.

7 (b) Before applying for a grant, the eligible grant
8 recipient shall notify the owner that is the subject of the
9 grant of the following in writing:

(1) That interests in real property acquired with a
grant from the fund result in a permanent conveyance
of such interests in real property from the owner to the
eligible grant recipient or its assigns; and

14 (2) That it may be in the owner's interest to retain
15 independent legal counsel, appraisals and other
16 professional advice.

17 The application shall contain an affirmation that the18 notice requirement of this subsection has been met.

(c) Grants from the fund shall be awarded based upon
the conservation criteria and financial criteria
contained in this section. In each application, the
eligible grant recipient shall provide information
regarding how the proposal meets one or more of these
criteria and advances the purposes of this article.

25 (d) For purposes of this article, conservation criteria26 include:

27 (1) Unique or important wildlife habitat as specified28 in the State Wildlife Conservation Action Plan;

29 (2) Habitat for rare, threatened or endangered species;

30 (3) A relatively undisturbed or outstanding example
31 of an ecosystem or natural community indigenous to
32 West Virginia;

33 (4) An important area for public hunting, fishing or34 other outdoor recreational uses;

35 (5) Important recreation lands or important habitats36 identified in county comprehensive plans;

37 (6) Riparian habitats, wetlands, water quality,
38 watersheds of significant ecological value or critical
39 aquifer recharge areas;

40 (7) Forest land or working land that has strategic41 economic significance;

42 (8) A larger area containing conserved lands or as a43 connection between conserved lands;

44 (9) Land of unique cultural, historical or 45 archaeological significance;

46 (10) Degree of threat to land; and

47 (11) The number of acres of land to be conserved.

48 (e) For purposes of this article, financial criteria 49 include:

50 (1) The degree to which the proposal leverages grants
51 from the fund by including funding or in-kind assets or
52 services from other governmental sources; and

(2) The degree to which the proposal leverages grants
from the fund by including funding or in-kind assets or
services from private or nonprofit sources or charitable
donations, including bargain sales of interests in real
property for conservation purposes;

58 (f) The board of the fund shall evaluate each proposal

according to the conservation criteria and financial
criteria set forth in this section, and shall award grants
on the basis of how well proposals meet these two
criteria.

63 (g) If an eligible grant recipient entity is dissolved or 64 ceases to exist as an entity, or if any interests in real 65 property obtained with a grant from the fund are not 66 being utilized strictly for conservation purposes, the 67 real property interest shall vest in the fund upon 68 recording of a notice signed by the chair of the fund and 69 filed with the clerk of the appropriate county and the 70 fund may transfer the interest to an appropriate eligible 71 grant recipient.

CHAPTER 59. FEES, ALLOWANCES AND COSTS; NEWSPAPERS; LEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS.

ARTICLE 1. FEES AND ALLOWANCES.

§59-1-10. Fees to be charged by clerk of county commission.

- 1 For the purpose of this section, the word "page" is
- 2 defined as being a paper or electronic writing of not
- 3 more than legal size, $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 14".
- 4 The clerk of the county commission shall charge and 5 collect the following fees:

6 (a) When a writing is admitted to record, for receiving
7 proof of acknowledgment thereof, entering an order in
8 connection therewith, endorsing clerk's certificate of
9 recordation thereon and indexing in a proper index,
10 where the writing is a:

(1) Deed of conveyance (with or without a plat), trust
deed, fixture filing or security agreement concerning
real estate lease, fifteen dollars.

14 (2) Financing, continuation, termination or other
15 statement or writing permitted to be filed under chapter
16 forty-six of this code, ten dollars.

17 (3) Plat or map (with no deed of conveyance), ten18 dollars.

19 (4) Service discharge record, no charge.

20 (5) Any document or writing other than those 21 referenced in subdivisions (1), (2), (3) and (4) of this 22 subsection, ten dollars.

23 (6) If any document or writing contains more than five
24 pages, for each additional page, one dollar.

For any of the documents admitted to record pursuant to this subsection, if the clerk of the county commission has the technology available to receive these documents in electronic form or other media, the clerk shall set a reasonable fee to record these writings not to exceed the cost for filing paper documents.

31 (7) Eleven dollars of each recording fee received 32 pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be 33 retained by the county clerk for the operation of that office and four dollars of each of the aforesaid recording 34 35 fees together with five dollars of the recording fee collected pursuant to subdivision (5) of this section, shall 36 37 be paid by the county clerk into the State Treasurer and deposited in equal amounts for deposit into the 38 39 Farmland Protection Fund created in article twelve. chapter eight-a of this code for the benefit of the West 40 41 Virginia Agricultural Land Protection Authority and 42 into the Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund created in 43 article two-g, chapter five-b of this code: Provided, 44 That the funds deposited pursuant to this subdivision may only be used for costs, excluding personnel costs, 45 46 associated with purpose of land conservation, as defined in subsection (f), section seven, article two-g, chapter 47 five-b of this code. 48

(b) For administering any oath other than oaths by
officers and employees of the state, political
subdivisions of the state or a public or quasi-public
entity of the state or a political subdivision of the state,
taken in his or her official capacity, five dollars.

54 (c) For issuance of marriage license and other duties 55 pertaining to the marriage license (including preparation of the application, administrating the oath, 56 57 registering and recording the license, mailing 58 acknowledgment of minister's return to one of the 59 licensees and notification to a licensee after sixty days 60 of the nonreceipt of the minister's return), thirty-five 61 dollars.

62 (1) One dollar of the marriage license fee received 63 pursuant to this subsection shall be paid by the county 64 clerk into the State Treasury as a state registration fee 65 in the same manner that license taxes are paid into the 66 Treasury under article twelve, chapter eleven of this 67 code;

(2) Fifteen dollars of the marriage license fee received
pursuant to this subsection shall be paid by the county
clerk into the State Treasury for the family protection
shelter support act in the same manner that license
taxes are paid into the Treasury under article twelve,
chapter eleven of this code;

(3) Ten dollars of the marriage license fee received
pursuant to this subsection shall be deposited in the
courthouse facilities improvement fund created by
section six, article twenty-six, chapter twenty-nine of
this code.

79 (d)(1) For a copy of any writing or document, if it is80 not otherwise provided for, one dollar fifty cents.

81 (2) If the copy of the writing or document contains
82 more than two pages, for each additional page, one
83 dollar.

84 (3) For annexing the seal of the commission or clerk to85 any paper, one dollar.

86 (4) For a certified copy of a birth certificate, death87 certificate or marriage license, five dollars.

88 (e) For copies of any record in electronic form or a

- 89
- medium other than paper, a reasonable fee set by the clerk of the county commission not to exceed the costs associated with document search and duplication. 90
- 91

The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chairman Senate Committee

Chairman House Committee

Originated in the Senate.

In effect ninety days from passage.

Clerk of the Senate

Clerk of the House of Delegates

President of the Senate

Speaker House of Delegates

The within Mappine this the 27/2 Day of . May ., 2008. Governor

PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR

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Time 10:0511m