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H. B. 2810

(By Delegates Guthrie, Pushkin, Byrd, Rowe, McCuskey,
B. White, Stansbury and Walters)

[Introduced February 18, 2015; referred to the
Committee on the Judiciary then Finance.]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section, designated §31-18-28, relating to implementing the West Virginia Property Rescue Initiative to reduce the number of properties posing a threat to public health and safety and the vitality of neighborhoods and communities throughout the state.

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 section, designated §31-18-28, to read as follows:

ARTICLE 18. WEST VIRGINIA HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FUND.

§31-18-28. West Virginia Property Rescue Initiative: findings; technical assistance and revolving loan program for removal of dilapidated housing; reporting required.

The program set forth in this section shall be known as the "West Virginia Property Rescue Initiative".

The Legislature finds that a great number of dilapidated housing structures exist throughout

1 the state and that county and municipal officials often lack the training and resources to identify,
2 purchase, remove or rehabilitate these structures and return the property to a condition beneficial to
3 their communities. The Legislature further finds that these structures contribute to increased crime
4 in neighborhoods, including illicit drug use and sales; pose threats to health and safety; decrease the
5 values of surrounding properties; and reduce the quality of life in their communities and
6 neighborhoods. The Legislature further finds that improved properties expand housing
7 opportunities, increase property values and enhance the quality of life in communities and
8 neighborhoods.

9 The Legislature finds that the housing development fund, as a public body corporate and the
10 state's leading housing authority, has the expertise and resources to lead a property rescue initiative
11 to assist counties and municipalities in removing or rehabilitating dilapidated housing and improving
12 their communities and neighborhoods by providing technical assistance, training and consultation
13 and needed financial resources.

14 The housing development fund shall implement the West Virginia Property Rescue Initiative
15 to provide technical assistance, training and consultation to counties and municipalities by
16 maintaining lists of contractors, developers, nonprofit organizations, disposal companies and land
17 fills available to assist counties and municipalities in the removal or rehabilitation of dilapidated
18 properties, by providing information on the use of the West Virginia Property Rescue Initiative in
19 other jurisdictions; by conducting seminars in strategic areas of the state to encourage and inform
20 community leaders in counties and municipalities on how to successfully use the West Virginia
21 Property Rescue Initiative to improve their communities and neighborhoods individually and in
22 combination with other counties or municipalities for economies of scale and efficient use of local

1 resources.

2 For the purpose of the West Virginia Property Rescue Initiative, the housing development
3 fund shall establish and fund a revolving loan program to make funding available to counties and
4 municipalities for removal or rehabilitation of dilapidated structures on such terms for repayment
5 of loans, with or without interest, as the housing development fund finds appropriate to maximize
6 the benefits of the West Virginia Property Rescue Initiative on an ongoing basis, with a commitment
7 by the housing development fund to deposit at least \$5 million to the West Virginia Property Rescue
8 Initiative Revolving Loan Fund over a five year period beginning in July, 2015, at the rate of at least
9 \$1 million per fiscal year.

10 To enhance success of the West Virginia Property Rescue Initiative, the housing development
11 fund shall seek grants and awards of funding to be made to the housing development fund or direct
12 to counties and municipalities for their property rescue initiatives, from public and private
13 organizations and government agencies, federal and state, in order to provide both for additional
14 funding for the property rescue revolving loan fund or repayment of loans and for grants to counties
15 and municipalities with dire need and limited resources such that special aid and funding is needed
16 to begin and complete their local property rescue initiatives.

17 Following the initial five years of the West Virginia Property Rescue Initiative, the housing
18 development fund board shall evaluate participation and success of the initiative and determine
19 whether and how to adjust services and levels of funding. The executive director of the housing
20 development fund shall report on changes to the program or initiatives to the Joint Committee on
21 Government and Finance along with an annual report for the five years of the West Virginia Property
22 Rescue Initiative.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to direct the West Virginia Housing Development Fund to implement a statewide property rescue initiative, to allocate \$1 million per year for five years to a revolving loan program, to provide for removal or rehabilitation of dilapidated housing throughout the state by counties and municipalities through training, technical services, and consultation, and with annual reports to the Legislature.

§31-18-28 is new, therefore it has been completely underscored.