WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2017 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 3092

BY DELEGATE PHILLIPS

[Introduced March 14, 2017; Referred

to the Committee on Energy then Finance.]

A BILL to amend and reenact §11-1C-10 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to the valuation of oil and gas producing property through use of a yield capitalization model or use of actual costs when provided.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §11-1C-10 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted to read as follows:

ARTICLE 1C. FAIR AND EQUITABLE PROPERTY VALUATION.

§11-1C-10. Valuation of industrial property and natural resources property by Tax Commissioner; penalties; methods; values sent to assessors.

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Industrial property" means real and personal property integrated as a functioning unit intended for the assembling, processing and manufacturing of finished or partially finished products.

(2) "Natural resources property" means coal, oil, natural gas, limestone, fireclay, dolomite, sandstone, shale, sand and gravel, salt, lead, zinc, manganese, iron ore, radioactive minerals, oil shale, managed timberland as defined in section two of this article, and other minerals.

(b) All owners of industrial property and natural resources property each year shall make a return to the State Tax Commissioner and, if requested in writing by the assessor of the county where situated, to such county assessor at a time and in the form specified by the commissioner of all industrial or natural resources property owned by them. The commissioner may require any information to be filed which would be useful in valuing the property covered in the return. Any penalties provided for in this chapter or elsewhere in this code relating to failure to list any property or to file any return or report may be applied to any owner of property required to make a return pursuant to this section.

(c) The State Tax Commissioner shall value all industrial property in the state at its fair market value within three years of the approval date of the plan for industrial property required in subsection (e) of this section. The commissioner shall thereafter maintain accurate values for all such property. The Tax Commissioner shall forward each industrial property appraisal to the county assessor of the county in which that property is located and the assessor shall multiply each such appraisal by sixty percent and include the resulting assessed value in the land book or the personal property book, as appropriate for each tax year. The commissioner shall supply support data that the assessor might need to evaluate the appraisal.

(d) Within three years of the approval date of the plan required for natural resources property required pursuant to subsection (e) of this section, the State Tax Commissioner shall determine the fair market value of all natural resources property in the state. With regard to oil and or gas producing property, fair market value shall be determined through the process of applying a yield capitalization model to the net proceeds (gross receipts less royalties paid, less operating expenses, which include transportation and compression charges.) The Tax Commissioner shall, every five years, determine the average annual industry operating expenses per well. The average annual industry operating expenses shall be deducted from working interest gross receipts to determine an income stream for application of a yield capitalization procedure: *Provided*, That if the taxpayer provides the actual operating expenses for the taxpayer's property, the Tax Commissioner shall be required to use the actual operating expenses to determine the income stream for the application of a yield capitalization procedure. The commissioner shall thereafter maintain accurate values for all such property.

(1) In order to qualify for identification as managed timberland for property tax purposes the owner must annually certify, in writing to the Division of Forestry, that the property meets the definition of managed timberland as set forth in this article and contracts to manage property according to a plan that will maintain the property as managed timberland. In addition, each owner's certification must state that forest management practices will be conducted in accordance with approved practices from the publication "Best Management Practices for Forestry". Property certified as managed timberland shall be valued according to its use and productive potential.

The Tax Commissioner shall promulgate rules for certification as managed timberland.

(2) In the case of all other natural resources property, the commissioner shall develop an inventory on a county by county basis of all such property and may use any resources, including, but not limited to, geological survey information; exploratory, drilling, mining and other information supplied by natural resources property owners; and maps and other information on file with the state ~~Division~~ Department of Environmental Protection and office of miners' health, safety and training. Any information supplied by natural resources owners or any proprietary or otherwise privileged information supplied by the state ~~Division~~ Department of Environmental Protection and office of miner's health, safety and training shall be kept confidential unless needed to defend an appraisal challenged by a natural resources owner. Formulas for natural resources valuation may contain differing variables based upon known geological or other common factors. The Tax Commissioner shall forward each natural resources property appraisal to the county assessor of the county in which that property is located and the assessor shall multiply each such appraisal by sixty percent and include the resulting assessed value in the land book or the personal property book, as appropriate, for each tax year. The commissioner shall supply support data that the assessor might need to explain or defend the appraisal. The commissioner shall directly defend any challenged appraisal when the assessed value of the property in question exceeds $2 million or an owner challenging an appraisal holds or controls property situated in the same county with an assessed value exceeding $2 million. At least every five years, the commissioner shall review current technology for the recovery of natural resources property to determine if valuation methodologies need to be adjusted to reflect changes in value which result from development of new recovery technologies.

(e) The Tax Commissioner shall develop a plan for the valuation of industrial property and a plan for the valuation of natural resources property. The plans shall include expected costs and reimbursements, and shall be submitted to the property valuation training and procedures commission on or before January 1, 1991, for its approval on or before July 1, of such year. Such plan shall be revised, resubmitted to the commission and approved every three years thereafter.

(f) To perform the valuation duties under this section, the State Tax Commissioner has the authority to contract with a competent property appraisal firm or firms to assist with or to conduct the valuation process as to any discernible species of property statewide if the contract and the entity performing such contract is specifically included in a plan required by subsection (e) of this section or otherwise approved by the commission. If the Tax Commissioner desires to contract for valuation services only in one county or a group of counties, the contract must be approved by the commission.

(g) The county assessor may accept the appraisal provided, pursuant to this section, by the State Tax Commissioner: *Provided,* That if the county assessor fails to accept the appraisal provided by the State Tax Commissioner, the county assessor shall show just cause to the valuation commission for the failure to accept such appraisal and shall further provide to the valuation commission a plan by which a different appraisal will be conducted.

(h) The costs of appraising the industrial and natural resources property within each county, and any costs of defending same shall be paid by the state: *Provided,* That the office of the State Attorney General shall provide legal representation on behalf of the Tax Commissioner or assessor, at no cost, in the event the industrial and natural resources appraisal is challenged in court.

(i) For purposes of revaluing managed timberland as defined in section two of this article, any increase or decrease in valuation by the commissioner does not become effective prior to July 1, 1991. The property owner may request a hearing by the Director of the Division of Forestry, who may thereafter rescind the disqualification or allow the property owner a reasonable period of time in which to qualify the property. A property owner may appeal a disqualification to the circuit court of the county in which the property is located.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to clarify, for the purposes of this article, that the fair market value of oil and/or gas producing property is to be calculated through a yield capitalization procedure, using actual operating expenses when provided by the taxpayer.

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