

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2043

FISCAL
NOTE

BY DELEGATES HOWELL, FAST, HAMRICK AND ROWE

[Introduced February 10, 2021; Referred to the Committee
on Technology and Infrastructure then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §5B-2I-4 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to authorizing the West Virginia Tourism Office to enter into an agreement with the Division
 3 of Highways to provide staff at the welcome centers and highway rest areas; and to create
 4 displays promoting in-state tourism at the welcome centers and rest areas.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2I. WEST VIRGINIA TOURISM OFFICE.

§5B-2I-4. Powers and duties of the West Virginia Tourism Office.

1 (a) The West Virginia Tourism Office, under the direction and charge of the Executive
 2 Director of the West Virginia Tourism Office, shall develop and implement a comprehensive
 3 tourism advertising, promotion, and development strategy for West Virginia. “Comprehensive
 4 tourism advertising, promotion and development strategy” means a plan that outlines strategies
 5 and activities designed to continue, diversify and expand the tourism base of the state as a whole;
 6 create tourism jobs; develop a highly skilled tourism workforce; facilitate business access to
 7 capital for tourism; advertise and market the resources offered by the state with respect to tourism
 8 advertising, promotion and development; facilitate cooperation among local, regional and private
 9 tourism enterprises; improve infrastructure on a state, regional and community level in order to
 10 facilitate tourism development; improve the tourism business climate generally; and leverage
 11 funding from sources other than the state, including local, federal and private sources. In addition
 12 to all other power and duties of the West Virginia Tourism Office by other provisions of this code,
 13 the West Virginia Tourism Office shall:

14 (1) Coordinate media events to promote a positive image of West Virginia and new
 15 investment in the tourist industry;

16 (2) Provide comprehensive strategic planning services to existing tourism enterprises;

17 (3) Promote attractions of West Virginia in other states;

18 (4) Provide advertising, marketing and communications goods and services, including,
 19 without limitation, a cooperative advertising program to facilitate and allow participation in the

20 West Virginia Tourism Office's advertising and marketing campaigns and activities, to state
21 agencies, departments, units of state or local government, private tourism enterprises and other
22 persons, entities, or private enterprises, including, without limitation, convention and visitors'
23 bureaus; and

24 (5) Distribute West Virginia informational publications and manage the West Virginia
25 Welcome Centers. The Tourism Office may enter into an agreement with the Division of Highways
26 to provide additional or existing staff at the welcome centers and highway rest areas and to create
27 displays promoting in-state tourism.

28 (b) In developing its strategies, plans and campaigns, the West Virginia Tourism Office
29 shall consider the following:

30 (1) Improvement and expansion of existing tourism marketing and promotion activities;

31 (2) Promotion of cooperation among municipalities, counties and the West Virginia
32 Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council in funding physical infrastructure to enhance the
33 potential for tourism development.

34 (c) The West Virginia Tourism Office shall have the power and duty:

35 (1) To acquire for the state in the name of the West Virginia Tourism Office by purchase,
36 lease or agreement, or accept or reject for the state, in the name of the West Virginia Tourism
37 Office, gifts, donations, contributions, bequests or devises of money, security or property, both
38 real and personal, and any interest in such property, to effectuate or support the purposes of this
39 article;

40 (2) To make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature of any legislation
41 deemed necessary to facilitate the carrying out of any of the foregoing powers and duties and to
42 exercise any other power that may be necessary or proper for the orderly conduct of the business
43 of the West Virginia Tourism Office and the effective discharge of the duties of the West Virginia
44 Tourism Office;

45 (3) To cooperate and assist in the production of motion pictures and television and other

46 communications;

47 (4) To purchase advertising time or space in or upon any medium generally engaged or
48 employed for said purpose to advertise and market the resources of the state or to inform the
49 public at large or any specifically targeted group or industry about the benefits of living in, investing
50 in, producing in, buying from, contracting with, or in any other way related to, the State of West
51 Virginia or any business, industry, agency, institution, or other entity therein;

52 (5) To promote and disseminate information related to the attractions of the state through
53 the operation of the state's telemarketing initiative, which telemarketing initiative shall include a
54 centralized reservation and information system for state parks and recreational facilities;

55 (6) To take such additional factors as may be necessary to carry out the duties and
56 programs described in this article; and

57 (7) To provide assistance to and assist with retention and expansion of existing tourism-
58 related enterprises in the state and to recruit or assist in the recruitment of new tourism-related
59 enterprises to the state.

60 (d) The West Virginia Tourism Office may contract with the Division of Highways to sell
61 advertising space on the WV511 website to promote in-state tourism and raise capital for
62 technological improvements to the website: *Provided*, That 50 percent of the money collected for
63 sale of advertising space is deposited into the Tourism Promotion Fund and the other 50 percent
64 of the money collected from the sale of advertising space is remitted to the Division of Highways
65 pursuant to the contract.

66 (e) The West Virginia Tourism Office may charge and collect reasonable fees for goods
67 and services it provides to state agencies, departments, units of state or local government or other
68 person, entity or enterprise. All moneys collected by the West Virginia Tourism Office shall be
69 deposited in the Tourism Promotion Fund and used in accordance with the provisions of this
70 article.

71 (f) The West Virginia Tourism Office may engage and retain one or more advertising and

72 marketing agencies, consultants, enterprises, firms, or persons, as deemed by the Executive
73 Director of the West Virginia Tourism Office, in his or her sole discretion, necessary or advisable
74 to assist the West Virginia Tourism Office in carrying out its powers and duties as set forth in this
75 article. In the procurement of advertising agencies, consultants, enterprises, or persons, from time
76 to time, estimated to cost \$250,000 or more, the Executive Director of the West Virginia Tourism
77 Office shall encourage such advertising and marketing agencies, consultants, enterprises, firms
78 or persons to submit an expression of interest, which shall include a statement of qualifications,
79 including anticipated concepts and proposed advertising, marketing and advertising campaigns.
80 All potential contracts shall be announced by public notice published as a Class II legal
81 advertisement in compliance with the provisions of §59-3-3 of this code. A committee of three to
82 five representatives of the West Virginia Tourism Office or the Tourism Commission, as selected
83 by the chair of the Tourism Commission, shall evaluate the statements of qualifications and other
84 materials submitted by interested firms and select three firms which, in their opinion, are best
85 qualified to perform the desired service. The committee shall then rank, in order of preference,
86 the three firms selected and shall commence scope of service and price negotiations with the first
87 ranked firm. If the West Virginia Tourism Office is unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with
88 the first ranked firm, at a fee determined to be fair and reasonable, price negotiations with the firm
89 of second choice shall commence. Failing accord with the second ranked firm, the committee
90 shall undertake price negotiations with the third ranked firm. If the West Virginia Tourism Office is
91 unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with any of the selected firms, the office shall select
92 additional firms in order of their competence and qualifications and it shall continue negotiations
93 in accordance with this section until an agreement is reached.

94 If the procurement of the services is estimated by the executive director to cost less than
95 \$250,000, the West Virginia Tourism Office shall conduct discussions with three or more firms
96 solicited on the basis of known or submitted qualifications for the assignment prior to the awarding
97 of any contract: *Provided*, That if a judgment is made that special circumstances exist and that

98 seeking competition is not practical, the West Virginia Tourism Office may, with the prior written
99 approval of the Secretary of Commerce, select a firm on the basis of previous satisfactory
100 performance and knowledge of the West Virginia Tourism Office's needs. After selection, the
101 West Virginia Tourism Office and selected firm shall develop the scope of desired services and
102 negotiate a contract.

103 (g) The Executive Director of the West Virginia Tourism Office may, in order to carry out
104 the powers and duties of the West Virginia Tourism Office described in this article, employ
105 necessary personnel, contract with professional or technical experts or consultants and purchase
106 or contract for the necessary equipment or supplies.

107 (h) The Executive Director of the West Virginia Tourism Office may designate, in writing,
108 with the written consent of the Secretary of Commerce, a list of positions within the West Virginia
109 Tourism Office that shall be exempt from coverage under the state's classified service.

110 (i) The West Virginia Tourism Office shall submit a report annually to the Governor,
111 Secretary of Commerce, and the Legislature about the development of the tourism industry in the
112 state and the necessary funding required by the state to continue the development of the tourism
113 industry.

114 (j) The West Virginia Tourism Office and the Executive Director of the West Virginia
115 Tourism Office shall engage, collaborate, assist, and cooperate with the West Virginia
116 Development Office, when and as appropriate, to facilitate retention, expansion, recruitment and
117 location of existing and new tourism-related enterprises.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to authorize the West Virginia Tourism Office to enter into an agreement with the Division of Highways to provide staff at welcome centers and highway rest areas, and to create displays promoting in-state tourism at the welcome centers and rest areas.

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