WEST virginia legislature

**FISCAL NOTE**

2021 regular session

Introduced

Senate Bill 368

By Senators Swope, Stollings, Plymale, Phillips, Woelfel, Smith, Baldwin, and Jeffries

[Introduced February 19, 2021; referred

to the Committee on Economic Development]

A BILL to amend and reenact §22-15A-1 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; to amend said code by adding thereto a new section, designated §22-15A-30; and to amend and reenact §22-16-12 of said code, all relating to authorizing the Department of Environmental Protection to develop the Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program to reclaim abandoned and dilapidated structures in order to improve West Virginia communities and to open new parcels for development; creating a special revenue fund; providing a statement of legislative findings and purpose; and permitting the payment of excess money from the Solid Waste Facility Closure Cost Assistance Fund into the Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program Fund.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 15A. THE A. JAMES MANCHIN REHABILITATION ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN.

§22-15A-1. Legislative findings and purpose.

(a) The Legislature finds that litter is a public nuisance and distracts from the beauty of the state and its natural resources. It is therefore necessary to establish and implement a litter control program to coordinate public and private litter control efforts; to establish penalties for littering; to provide for litter pickup programs; to create education programs; and to provide assistance to local solid waste authority litter control efforts.

(b) The Legislature further finds that the improper management of commercial and residential solid waste and the unlawful disposal of such waste ~~creates~~ create open dumps that adversely ~~impacts~~ impact the state’s natural resources, public water supplies, and the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the state. It is therefore necessary to establish a program to promote pollution prevention and to eliminate and remediate open dumps.

(c) The Legislature further finds that waste tire piles are a direct product of state citizens’ use and enjoyment of state roads and highways, and proper tire waste disposal is a necessary component of maintenance of the transportation system. The accumulation of waste tires has also become a significant environmental and public health hazard to the state, and the location and number of waste tires are directly related to the efficiency of travel, by citizens, visitors and commerce, along public highways in West Virginia. In particular, the Legislature recognizes that waste tires are widespread in location and in number throughout the state; waste tires physically touch and concern public highways, including, but not limited to, state roads, county roads, park roads, secondary routes, and orphan roads, all of which interferes with the efficiency of public highways; and further that the existence of waste tires along and near public highways is sometimes accompanied by other hazards and, in turn, adversely impacts the proper maintenance and efficiency of public highways for citizens.

(d) The Legislature also recognizes and declares that waste tires are a public nuisance and hazard; that waste tires serve as harborage and breeding places for rodents, mosquitoes, fleas, ticks, and other insects and pests injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare; that waste tires collected in large piles pose an excessive risk to public health, safety, and welfare from disease or fire; that the environmental, economic, and societal damage resulting from fires in waste tire piles can be avoided by removing the piles; and that tire pile fires cause extensive pollution of the air and surface and groundwater for miles downwind and downstream from the fire.

(e) Therefore, in view of the findings relating to waste tires, the Legislature declares it to be the public policy of the State of West Virginia to eliminate the present danger resulting from discarded or abandoned waste tires and to eliminate the visual pollution resulting from waste tire piles and that in order to provide for the public health, safety, welfare, and quality of life, and to reverse the adverse impacts to the proper maintenance and efficiency of public highways, it is necessary to enact legislation to those ends by providing expeditious means and methods for effecting the disposal of waste tires.

(f) The Legislature further finds that abandoned and dilapidated structures statewide have become a significant hazard and can result in the formation of open dumps or solid waste not disposed of in a proper or lawful manner. In particular, the Legislature recognizes that damage to the environment, natural resources, and the public health, safety, and welfare may result from abandoned and dilapidated structures. Abandoned and dilapidated structures are widespread in location and in number throughout the state; and further, that the existence of abandoned and dilapidated structures along and near public highways is sometimes accompanied by other hazards and, in turn, adversely impacts the proper maintenance and efficiency of public highways for citizens.

(g) Therefore, in view of the findings relating to abandoned and dilapidated structures, the Legislature declares it to be the public policy of the State of West Virginia to establish a program to eliminate and remediate abandoned and dilapidated structures.

~~(f)~~ (h) The Legislature finds that many citizens desire a recycling program in order to conserve limited natural resources, reduce litter, recycle valuable materials, extend the useful life of solid waste landfills, reduce the need for new landfills, and create markets for recyclable materials. It is therefore necessary to establish goals for recycling solid waste; to require certain municipalities to implement recycling programs; to authorize counties to adopt comprehensive recycling programs; to encourage source separation of solid waste; to increase the purchase of recycled products by the various agencies and instrumentalities of government; and to educate the public concerning the benefits of recycling.

~~(g)~~ (i) The Legislature finds that the effectiveness of litter control, open dump, tire clean up programs and recycling programs have been made less efficient by fragmented implementation of the various programs by different agencies. It is therefore necessary to coordinate all such programs under one program managed by the Department to ensure that all current and future litter, open dump, waste tire and recycling issues are managed and addressed efficiently and effectively.

~~(h)~~ (j) This article implements the A. James Manchin Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan, a coordinated effort to address litter, waste, open dump, tire clean up and recycling programs.

§22-15A-30. Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program.

(a) To assist county commissions or municipalities in their efforts to remediate abandoned and dilapidated structures as provided by §7-1-3ff and §8-38-5 of this code, the Department of Environmental Protection may develop a program called the Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program. Using the fund established in §22-15A-30(b) of this code, the Department of Environmental Protection may work with county commissions or municipalities and implement redevelopment plans which will, at a minimum, establish prioritized inventories of structures eligible to participate in the program, offer reuse options for high-priority sites, and recommend actions county commissions or municipalities may take to remediate abandoned and dilapidated structures in their communities.

(b) There is created in the State Treasury a special revenue fund known as the Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program Fund. The fund shall be comprised of any money granted by charitable foundations, allocated by the Legislature, allocated from federal agencies, and earned from the investment of money held in the fund, and all other money designated for deposit to the fund from any source, public or private. The fund shall operate as a special revenue fund and all deposits and payments into the fund do not expire to the General Revenue Fund but shall remain in the account and be available for expenditure in succeeding fiscal years.

(c) The fund, to the extent that money is available, may be used solely to assist county commissions or municipalities in remediating abandoned and dilapidated structures in their communities by demolishing or deconstructing them and other activities as authorized by a charitable grant or legislative appropriation. The fund may also be used to defray costs incurred by the Department of Environmental Protection in administering the provisions of this section. However, no more than five percent of money transferred from the Solid Waste Facility Closure Cost Assistance Fund may be used for administrative purposes.

(d) The Department of Environmental Protection may promulgate rules, in accordance with the provisions of §29A-3-1 *et seq.* of this code, to govern the disbursement of money from the fund, establish the Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program, direct the distribution of money from the fund, and establish criteria for eligibility to receive money from the fund.

ARTICLE 16. SOLID WASTE LANDFILL CLOSURE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

§22-16-12. Solid Waste Facility Closure Cost Assistance Fund; closure extension; reporting requirements.

(a) The Closure Cost Assistance Fund continues as a special revenue account in the State Treasury. The fund operates as a special fund in which all deposits and payments do not expire to the General Revenue Fund, but remain in the account and are available for expenditure in the succeeding fiscal year. Separate subaccounts may be established within the special account for the purpose of identification of various revenue resources and payment of specific obligations.

(b) Interest earned on any money in the fund shall be deposited to the credit of the fund.

(c) The fund consists of the following:

(1) Moneys collected and deposited in the State Treasury which are specifically designated by Acts of the Legislature for inclusion in the fund, including moneys collected and deposited into the fund pursuant to section four of this article;

(2) Contributions, grants and gifts from any source, both public and private, which may be used by the secretary for any project or projects;

(3) Amounts repaid by permitees pursuant to section eighteen, article fifteen of this chapter; and

(4) All interest earned on investments made by the state from moneys deposited in this fund.

(d) The Solid Waste Management Board, upon written approval of the secretary, has the authority to pledge all or part of the revenues paid into the Closure Cost Assistance Fund as needed to meet the requirements of any revenue bond issue or issues of the Solid Waste Management Board authorized by this article, including the payment of principal of, interest and redemption premium, if any, on the revenue bonds and the establishing and maintaining of a reserve fund or funds for the payment of the principal of, interest and redemption premium, if any, on the revenue bond issue or issues where other moneys pledged may be insufficient. Any pledge of moneys in the Closure Cost Assistance Fund for revenue bonds is a prior and superior charge on the fund over the use of any of the moneys in the fund to pay for the cost of any project on a cash basis. Expenditures from the fund, other than for the retirement of revenue bonds, may only be made in accordance with this article.

(e) The amounts deposited in the fund may be expended only on the cost of projects as provided in sections three and fifteen of this article, as provided in subsection (f) of this section and for payment of bonds and notes issued pursuant to section five of this article. No more than two percent of the annual deposits to the fund may be used for administrative purposes.

(f) Notwithstanding any provision of this article, upon request of the Solid Waste Management Board, and with the approval of the projects by the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, the secretary may pledge and place into escrow accounts up to an aggregate of $2 million of the fund to satisfy two years debt service requirement that ~~permitees~~ permittees of publicly owned landfills and transfer stations are required to meet in order to obtain loans. Pledges shall be made on a project-by-project basis, may not exceed $500,000 for a project and are made available after loan commitments are received. The secretary may pledge funds for a loan only when the following conditions are met:

(1) The proceeds of the loan are used only to perform construction of a transfer station or a composite liner system that is required to meet title forty-seven, series thirty-eight, solid waste management rules;

(2) The permittee dedicates all yearly debt service revenue, as determined by the Public Service Commission, to meet the repayment schedule of the loan, before it uses available revenue for any other purpose; and

(3) That any funds pledged may only be paid to the lender if the permittee is in default on the loan.

(g) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, the Elkins-Randolph County Landfill, located in Randolph County, and the Webster County Landfill, located in Webster County, are eligible for funds from the Solid Waste Facility Closure Cost Assistance Fund necessary to complete their closure upon the filing of appropriate application. Upon the filing of an appropriate application, the Department of Environmental Protection shall work with the applicant to ensure the application meets the departments requirements.

(h) The Department of Environmental Protection is required to file, by January 1 of each year, an annual report with the Joint Committee on Government and Finance providing details on the manner in which the landfill closure assistance funds were expended for the prior fiscal year.

(i) The Prichard Landfill in Wayne County is eligible for funds from the Closure Cost Assistance Fund necessary to complete post closure maintenance and monitoring upon the filing of an appropriate application. In the event of a permit transfer, neither the State nor the Wayne County economic development authority or entity may assume any liability from the private landfill other than post closure maintenance and monitoring costs.

(k)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this code, upon completion of the landfill closure-related services at all eligible landfills pursuant to §22-16-3 of this code, the secretary may transfer excess money from this fund to the Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program Fund created by §22-15A-30 of this code. However, the secretary may not transfer moneys from this fund that are required to be maintained so that the department can conduct post-closure activities authorized by this article and the legislative rules promulgated thereunder. The department shall maintain in this fund a minimum balance of twice the total cost of post-closure expenses projected for the fiscal year as a buffer for unanticipated necessary post-closure activities.

(2) Contingent upon the Department of Environmental Protection securing private foundation funding to establish the Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program, and prior to the completion of the landfill closure-related services at all eligible landfills, the secretary may expend money from this fund for pilot projects conducted by the Department of Environmental Protection demonstrating the function of the Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish and implement a program to reclaim abandoned and dilapidated structures in the state in order to improve our communities and to open new parcels for development. Dilapidated and abandoned structures are a blight on state communities and invite criminal activity as well as deter financial investment in state communities. The Reclamation of Abandoned and Dilapidated Properties Program will provide the State and its counties with a new tool to spur investment in our communities.

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