

# WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

## 2021 REGULAR SESSION

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 2860**

BY DELEGATES STATLER, BARNHART, HOLSTEIN,

LONGANACRE, BRIDGES, TONEY AND HANNA

[Introduced March 02, 2021; Referred to the  
Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
then the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §20-1-7 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating  
2 to requiring that open hunting season for big game begin on a Saturday.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 1. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION.**

**§20-1-7. Additional powers, duties and services of director.**

1 In addition to all other powers, duties, and responsibilities granted and assigned to the  
2 director in this chapter and elsewhere by law, the director may:

3 (1) With the advice of the commission, prepare and administer, through the various  
4 divisions created by this chapter, a long-range comprehensive program for the conservation of  
5 the natural resources of the state which best effectuates the purpose of this chapter and which  
6 makes adequate provisions for the natural resources laws of the state;

7 (2) Sign and execute in the name of the state by the Division of Natural Resources any  
8 contract or agreement with the federal government or its departments or agencies, subdivisions  
9 of the state, corporations, associations, partnerships, or individuals: *Provided*, That  
10 intergovernmental cooperative agreements and agreements with nongovernmental organizations  
11 in furtherance of providing a comprehensive program for the exploration, conservation,  
12 development, protection, enjoyment, and use of the natural resources of the state are exempt  
13 from the provisions of §5A-3-1 *et seq.* of this code: *Provided, however*, That repair, renovation  
14 and rehabilitation of existing facilities, buildings, amenities, and infrastructure necessary to protect  
15 public health or safety or to provide uninterrupted enjoyment and public use of state parks, state  
16 forests, wildlife management areas, and state natural areas under the jurisdiction of the Division  
17 of Natural Resources are exempt from the provisions of §5A-3-1 *et seq.* of this code. Nothing in  
18 this section authorizes new construction of buildings and new construction of recreational facilities  
19 as defined in §20-5-4 of this code without complying with the provisions of §5A-3-1 *et seq.* of this  
20 code.

21 (3) Conduct research in improved conservation methods and disseminate information

22 matters to the residents of the state;

23 (4) Conduct a continuous study and investigation of the habits of wildlife and, for purposes  
24 of control and protection, to classify by regulation the various species into such categories as may  
25 be established as necessary;

26 (5) Prescribe the locality in which the manner and method by which the various species of  
27 wildlife may be taken, or chased, unless otherwise specified by this chapter: Provided, That open  
28 hunting season for big game shall begin on a Saturday;

29 (6) Hold at least six meetings each year at such time and at such points within the state,  
30 as in the discretion of the Natural Resources Commission may appear to be necessary and proper  
31 for the purpose of giving interested persons in the various sections of the state an opportunity to  
32 be heard concerning open season for their respective areas, and report the results of the meetings  
33 to the Natural Resources Commission before the season and bag limits are fixed by it;

34 (7) Suspend open hunting season upon any or all wildlife in any or all counties of the state  
35 with the prior approval of the Governor in case of an emergency such as a drought, forest fire  
36 hazard, or epizootic disease among wildlife. The suspension shall continue during the existence  
37 of the emergency and until rescinded by the director. Suspension, or reopening after such  
38 suspension, of open seasons may be made upon 24 hours' notice by delivery of a copy of the  
39 order of suspension or reopening to the wire press agencies at the state capitol;

40 (8) Supervise the fiscal affairs and responsibilities of the division;

41 (9) Designate such localities as he or she shall determine to be necessary and desirable  
42 for the perpetuation of any species of wildlife;

43 (10) Enter private lands to make surveys or inspections for conservation purposes, to  
44 investigate for violations of provisions of this chapter, to serve and execute warrants and  
45 processes, to make arrests, and to otherwise effectively enforce the provisions of this chapter;

46 (11) Acquire for the state in the name of the Division of Natural Resources by purchase,  
47 condemnation, lease or agreement, or accept or reject for the state, in the name of the Division

48 of Natural Resources, gifts, donations, contributions, bequests, or devises of money, security or  
49 property, both real and personal, and any interest in such property, including lands and waters,  
50 which he or she deems suitable for the following purposes:

51 (a) For state forests for the purpose of growing timber, demonstrating forestry, furnishing  
52 or protecting watersheds, or providing public recreation;

53 (b) For state parks or recreation areas for the purpose of preserving scenic, aesthetic,  
54 scientific, cultural, archaeological, or historical values or natural wonders, or providing public  
55 recreation;

56 (c) For public hunting, trapping, or fishing grounds or waters for the purpose of providing  
57 areas in which the public may hunt, trap, or fish, as permitted by the provisions of this chapter  
58 and the rules issued hereunder;

59 (d) For fish hatcheries, game farms, wildlife research areas, and feeding stations;

60 (e) For the extension and consolidation of lands or waters suitable for the above purposes  
61 by exchange of other lands or waters under his or her supervision;

62 (f) For such other purposes as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter;

63 (12) Capture, propagate, transport, sell, or exchange any species of wildlife as may be  
64 necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter;

65 (13) Sell timber for not less than the value thereof, as appraised by a qualified appraiser  
66 appointed by the director, from all lands under the jurisdiction and control of the director, except  
67 those lands that are designated as state parks and those in the Kanawha State Forest. The  
68 appraisal shall be made within a reasonable time prior to any sale, reduced to writing, filed in the  
69 office of the director and shall be available for public inspection. The director must obtain the  
70 written permission of the Governor to sell timber when the appraised value is more than \$5,000.  
71 The director shall receive sealed bids therefor, after notice by publication as a Class II legal  
72 advertisement in compliance with the provisions of §59-3-1 *et seq.* of this code and the publication  
73 area for the publication shall be each county in which the timber is located. The timber so

74 advertised shall be sold at not less than the appraised value to the highest responsible bidder,  
75 who shall give bond for the proper performance of the sales contract as the director shall  
76 designate; but the director may reject any and all bids and re-advertise for bids. If the foregoing  
77 provisions of this section have been complied with and no bid equal to or in excess of the  
78 appraised value of the timber is received, the director may, at any time, during a period of six  
79 months after the opening of the bids, sell the timber in such manner as he or she deems  
80 appropriate, but the sale price may not be less than the appraised value of the timber advertised.  
81 No contract for sale of timber made pursuant to this section may extend for a period of more than  
82 10 years. And all contracts heretofore entered into by the state for the sale of timber may not be  
83 validated by this section if a contract is otherwise invalid. The proceeds arising from the sale of  
84 the timber so sold shall be paid to the Treasurer of the State of West Virginia and shall be credited  
85 to the division and used exclusively for the purposes of this chapter: *Provided*, That nothing  
86 contained herein may prohibit the sale of timber which otherwise would be removed from rights-  
87 of-way necessary for and strictly incidental to the extraction of minerals;

88 (14) Sell or lease, with the approval in writing of the Governor, coal, oil, gas, sand, gravel,  
89 and any other minerals that may be found in the lands under the jurisdiction and control of the  
90 director, except those lands that are designated as state parks. The director, before making sale  
91 or lease thereof, shall receive sealed bids therefor, after notice by publication as a Class II legal  
92 advertisement in compliance with the provisions of §59-3-1 *et seq.* of this code, and the  
93 publication area for such publication shall be each county in which such lands are located. The  
94 minerals so advertised shall be sold or leased to the highest responsible bidder, who shall give  
95 bond for the proper performance of the sales contract or lease as the director shall designate; but  
96 the director may reject any and all bids and re-advertise for bids. The proceeds arising from any  
97 such sale or lease shall be paid to the Treasurer of the State of West Virginia and shall be credited  
98 to the division and used exclusively for the purposes of this chapter;

99 (15) Exercise the powers granted by this chapter for the protection of forests and regulate

100 fires and smoking in the woods or in their proximity at such times and in such localities as may be  
101 necessary to reduce the danger of forest fires;

102 (16) Cooperate with departments and agencies of state, local, and federal governments  
103 in the conservation of natural resources and the beautification of the state;

104 (17) Report to the Governor each year all information relative to the operation and  
105 functions of the division and the director shall make such other reports and recommendations as  
106 may be required by the Governor, including an annual financial report covering all receipts and  
107 disbursements of the division for each fiscal year, and he or she shall deliver the report to the  
108 Governor on or before December 1 next after the end of the fiscal year so covered. A copy of the  
109 report shall be delivered to each house of the Legislature when convened in January next  
110 following;

111 (18) Keep a complete and accurate record of all proceedings, record and file all bonds  
112 and contracts taken or entered into, and assume responsibility for the custody and preservation  
113 of all papers and documents pertaining to his or her office, except as otherwise provided by law;

114 (19) Offer and pay, in his or her discretion, rewards for information respecting the violation,  
115 or for the apprehension and conviction of any violators, of any of the provisions of this chapter;

116 (20) Require such reports as he or she may determine to be necessary from any person  
117 issued a license or permit under the provisions of this chapter, but no person may be required to  
118 disclose secret processes or confidential data of competitive significance;

119 (21) Purchase as provided by law all equipment necessary for the conduct of the division;

120 (22) Conduct and encourage research designed to further new and more extensive uses  
121 of the natural resources of this state and to publicize the findings of the research;

122 (23) Encourage and cooperate with other public and private organizations or groups in  
123 their efforts to publicize the attractions of the state including, completing the feasibility study for  
124 the Beech Fork State Park Lodge as follows:

125 (a) The director shall convene, prior to October 1, 2019, two public hearings:

126 (i) An initial public hearing shall be for the purpose of seeking public input regarding  
127 options for the construction of a lodge and a conference center, including all available public,  
128 private, or public-private partnership (PPP) funding and financing options; and

129 (ii) A subsequent public hearing at which the feasibility study and any recommendation  
130 shall be available for public comment;

131 (b) The public hearings required by this subdivision must be held in a suitable location  
132 reasonably close to Beech Fork State Park so as to accommodate public participation from the  
133 citizens of Cabell, Lincoln, and Wayne counties; and

134 (c) Upon completion of the feasibility study it shall be submitted by the director to the Joint  
135 Committee on Government and Finance on or before December 1, 2019;

136 (24) Accept and expend, without the necessity of appropriation by the Legislature, any gift  
137 or grant of money made to the division for all purposes specified in this chapter and he or she  
138 shall account for and report on all such receipts and expenditures to the Governor;

139 (25) Cooperate with the state historian and other appropriate state agencies in conducting  
140 research with reference to the establishment of state parks and monuments of historic, scenic,  
141 and recreational value and to take such steps as may be necessary in establishing the  
142 monuments or parks as he or she deems advisable;

143 (26) Maintain in his or her office at all times, properly indexed by subject matter and also  
144 in chronological sequence, all rules made or issued under the authority of this chapter. The  
145 records shall be available for public inspection on all business days during the business hours of  
146 working days;

147 (27) Delegate the powers and duties of his or her office, except the power to execute  
148 contracts not related to land and stream management, to appointees and employees of the  
149 division, who shall act under the direction and supervision of the director and for whose acts he  
150 or she shall be responsible;

151 (28) Conduct schools, institutions, and other educational programs, apart from or in

152 cooperation with other governmental agencies, for instruction and training in all phases of the  
153 natural resources programs of the state;

154 (29) Authorize the payment of all or any part of the reasonable expenses incurred by an  
155 employee of the division in moving his or her household furniture and effects as a result of a  
156 reassignment of the employee: *Provided*, That no part of the moving expenses of any one such  
157 employee may be paid more frequently than once in 12 months;

158 (30) Establishing procedures and fee schedule for individuals applying for limited permit  
159 hunts;

160 (31) Promulgate rules, in accordance with the provisions of §29A-1-1 *et seq.* of this code,  
161 to implement and make effective the powers and duties vested in him or her by the provisions of  
162 this chapter and take such other steps as may be necessary in his or her discretion for the proper  
163 and effective enforcement of the provisions of this chapter;

164 (32) Exempt designated sections within the Division of Natural Resources from the  
165 requirement that all payments must be deposited in a bank within 24 hours for amounts less than  
166 \$500, notwithstanding any other provision of this code to the contrary: *Provided*, That such  
167 designated sections shall make a deposit in any amount no less than every seven working days;  
168 and

169 (33) Cooperate with the State Resiliency Office to the fullest extent practicable to assist  
170 that office in fulfilling its duties.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require that open hunting season for big game begin on a Saturday.

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