WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §22-25-1

§22-25-1. Legislative findings.

The Legislature finds that:

(1) Regulated and nonregulated entities that demonstrate a commitment to the environment by going beyond compliance with environmental laws and rules positively impact the quality of life for all citizens of the state by improving the economy and the environment by increasing consumer and public confidence, boosting management and employee morale, and operating in a safe and sensible manner that lessens impacts on the environment.

(2) While West Virginia's existing environmental laws play an important role in protecting the environment, environmental protection could be further enhanced by authorizing innovative advances in environmental regulatory methods and approaches.

(3) Enhanced public involvement allows the public and community to meaningfully participate in finding solutions for environmental issues in their community while maintaining the vitality of the local and state economy and strengthening ties between businesses, nonbusiness entities and community.

(4) Increased use of pollution prevention strategies, more cost-effective options for compliance with environmental standards, improvement of environmental performance, and reduction in occurrences of noncompliance with environmental standards can be achieved through the establishment and implementation of a voluntary environmental excellence program pursuant to this article. This voluntary program will provide entities with the opportunity to enter into an agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection through which the department shall grant recognition and other benefits to participating entities that comply with a prescribed number of program elements established by the secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection designed to reduce environmental impacts beyond those achieved by compliance with environmental laws and permits alone.

wvlegislature