WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §22-5-17

§22-5-17. Interstate ozone transport.

(a) This section of the Air Pollution Control Act may be referred to as the Interstate Ozone Transport Oversight Act.

(b) The Legislature hereby finds that:

(1) The federal Clean Air Act, as amended, contains a comprehensive regulatory scheme for the control of emissions from mobile and stationary sources, which will improve ambient air quality and health and welfare in all parts of the nation.

(2) The number of areas unable to meet national ambient air quality standards for ozone has been declining steadily and will continue to decline with air quality improvements resulting from implementation of the federal Clean Air Act amendments of 1990, and the mobile and stationary source emission controls specified therein.

(3) Scientific research on the transport of atmospheric ozone across state boundaries is proceeding under the auspices of the United States environmental protection agency (U.S. EPA), state agencies, and private entities, which research will lead to improved scientific understanding of the causes and nature of ozone transport, and emission control strategies potentially applicable thereto.

(4) The northeast ozone transport commission established by the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 has proposed emission control requirements for stationary and mobile sources in certain northeastern states and the District of Columbia in addition to those specified by the federal Clean Air Act amendments of 1990.

(5) Membership of the northeast ozone transport commission includes, by statute, representatives of state environmental agencies and Governors' offices; similar representation is required in the case of other ozone transport commissions established by the Administrator of the United States environmental protection agency pursuant to Section 176A of the federal Clean Air Act, as amended.

(6) The northeast ozone transport commission neither sought nor obtained state Legislative Oversight or approval prior to reaching its decisions on mobile and stationary source requirements for states included within the northeast ozone transport region.

(7) The Commonwealth of Virginia and other parties have challenged the Constitutionality of the northeast ozone transport commission and its regulatory proposals under the guarantee, compact, and joinder clauses of the United States Constitution.

(8) The United States environmental protection agency, acting outside of the aforementioned statutory requirements for the establishment of new interstate transport commissions, is

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encouraging the State of West Virginia and twenty-four other states outside of the northeast to participate in multistate negotiations through the ozone transport assessment group; such negotiations are intended to provide the basis for an interstate memorandum of understanding or other agreement on ozone transport requiring reductions of emissions of nitrogen oxides or volatile organic compounds in addition to those specified by the federal Clean Air Act amendments of 1990, membership of the ozone transport assessment group consists of state and federal air quality officials, without state legislative representation or participation by the Governor.

(9) Emission control requirements exceeding those specified by federal law can adversely affect state economic development, competitiveness, employment, and income without corresponding environmental benefits; in the case of electric utility emissions of nitrogen oxides, it is estimated that control costs in addition to those specified by the federal Clean Air Act could exceed $5 billion annually in a thirty-seven state region of the eastern United States, including the State of West Virginia.

(10) Requiring certain eastern states to meet emission control requirements more stringent than those otherwise applicable to other states and unnecessary for environmental protection would unfairly affect interstate competition for new industrial development and employment opportunities.

(c) It is therefore directed that:

(1) Not later than ten days subsequent to the receipt by the director of the Division of Environmental Protection of any proposed memorandum of understanding or other agreement by the ozone transport assessment group, or similar group, potentially requiring the State of West Virginia to undertake emission reductions in addition to those specified by the federal Clean Air Act, the director of the Division of Environmental Protection shall submit such proposed memorandum or other agreement to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates for consideration.

(2) Upon receipt of the aforesaid memorandum of understanding or agreement, the President and the Speaker shall refer the understanding or agreement to one or more appropriate legislative committees with a request that such committees convene one or more public hearings to receive comments from agencies of government and other interested parties on its prospective economic and environmental impacts on the State of West Virginia and its citizens, including impacts on energy use, taxes, economic development, utility costs and rates, competitiveness and employment.

(3) Upon completion of the public hearings required by the preceding subdivision, the committees(s) shall forward to the president and the speaker a report containing its findings and recommendations concerning any proposed memorandum of understanding or other agreement related to the interstate transport of ozone. The report shall make findings with respect to the economic, health, safety and welfare and environmental impacts on the State of West Virginia and its citizens, including impacts on energy use, taxes, economic

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development, utility costs and rates, competitiveness and employment.

(4) Upon receipt of the report required by the preceding subdivision, the president and speaker shall thereafter transmit the report to the Governor for such further consideration or action as may be warranted.

(5) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude the Legislature from taking such other action with respect to any proposed memorandum of understanding or other agreement related to the interstate transport of ozone as it deems appropriate.

(6) No person is authorized to commit the State of West Virginia to the terms of any such memorandum or agreement unless specifically approved by an act of the Legislature.

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