WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §5B-2G-2

§5B-2G-2. Legislative findings and purpose.

Legislative findings and purpose:

(a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that:

(1) The State of West Virginia's rural character, natural wonders, scenic beauty and recreational opportunities combine to create an exceptional quality of life for its citizens;

(2) West Virginia's landscapes serve as an economic engine supporting vibrant forest products, agricultural, hunting and fishing and tourism industries;

(3) West Virginia's unique and important lands are key to attracting new businesses and knowledge workers who are mobile and capable of doing business anywhere and critical to diversifying the economy of the State of West Virginia;

(4) West Virginia's unique and important lands provide all West Virginians hunting, fishing, rafting, hiking and other recreational opportunities important to their health and well-being;

(5) West Virginia's unique and important lands are critical to the continued health of the state's wildlife habitats and West Virginia's Wildlife Conservation Action Plan, mandated by the United States Congress, recognizes that habitat loss is a key issue confronting conservation of the state's valuable fish and wildlife resources;

(6) The conversion of rural land to developed land in West Virginia doubled between 1982 and 1997;

(7) There is a critical need to invest in the conservation of unique and important wildlife habitat, natural areas, forest lands, farmland and lands for hunting, fishing and recreation; and

(8) It is critical to encourage cooperation and innovative public partnerships among landowners, state agencies, nonprofit organizations and others which must work together in order to conserve West Virginia's most important unique and rural lands.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide persons and other entities an opportunity to voluntarily conserve land.

(c) Further, it is the intent of the Legislature to establish a West Virginia Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund, hereinafter "fund", to establish an ongoing funding source to conserve unique and important wildlife habitat, natural areas, forests, working lands, lands for hunting, fishing and recreation and other lands important to West Virginians.

WV Legislature

(d) The Legislature finds that an ongoing funding source to conserve unique and important lands will help to ensure that present and future generations of West Virginians are able to enjoy the economic, quality of life, health, recreational, scenic and other benefits of conserved lands.

WV Legislature