

# WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §5a-11-5

## **§5A-11-5. Public Land Corporation to hold public hearing before sale, lease, exchange or transfer of land or minerals.**

(a) Prior to any final decision of any state agency to sell, lease as a lessor, exchange or transfer land or minerals title to which is vested in the Public Land Corporation pursuant to this article, the Public Land Corporation shall:

(1) Prepare and reduce to writing the reasons and supporting data regarding the sale, lease, exchange or transfer of land or minerals. The written reasons required under this section shall be available for public inspection at the office of the county clerk at the county courthouse of each county in which the affected lands or minerals are located during the two successive weeks before the date of the public hearing required by this section;

(2) Provide for a public hearing to be held at a reasonable time and place within each county in which the affected lands or minerals are located to allow interested members of the public to attend the hearing without undue hardship. Members of the public may be present, submit statements and testimony and question the corporation's representative appointed pursuant to this section;

(3) Not less than thirty days prior to the public hearing, provide notice to all members of the Legislature, to the head of the governing body of any political subdivision having zoning or other land use regulatory responsibility in the geographic area within which the public lands or minerals are located and to the head of any political subdivision having administrative or public services responsibility in the geographic area within which the lands or minerals are located;

(4) Cause to be published a notice of the required public hearing. The notice shall be published as a Class II legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty-nine of this code and the publication area shall be each county in which the affected lands or minerals are located. The public hearing shall be held no earlier than the fourteenth successive day and no later than the twenty-first successive day following the first publication of the notice. The notice shall contain the time and place of the public hearing along with a brief description of the affected lands or minerals;

(5) Cause a copy of the required notice to be posted in a conspicuous place at the affected land for members of the public to observe. The notice shall remain posted for two successive weeks prior to the date of the public hearing;

(6) Appoint a representative of the corporation who shall conduct the required public hearing. The corporation's representative shall have full knowledge of all the facts and circumstances surrounding the proposed sale, lease, exchange or transfer. The representative of the corporation conducting the public hearing shall make the results of the

hearing available to the executive director of the Real Estate Division and the Secretary of the Department of Administration for consideration prior to making final decisions regarding the affected lands or minerals. The representative of the corporation shall make a report of the public hearing available for inspection by the public or, upon written request of any interested person, provide a written copy thereof and to all individuals previously receiving written notice of the hearing within thirty days following the public hearing; and

(7) If the evidence at the public hearing establishes by a preponderance that the appraisal provided for in subsection (d), section four of this article does not reflect the true, fair market value, the Public Land Corporation shall cause another appraisal to be made.

(8) If the evidence at the public hearing establishes by a preponderance that the sale or exchange of land does not meet the criteria set forth in subdivision three, subsection (a), section three of this article, the public land corporation may not proceed with the sale or exchange of said land without judicial approval.

(b) The corporation may not sell, lease, exchange or transfer lands or minerals before the thirtieth successive day following the public hearing required by this section, but in no event may the sale, lease, exchange or transfer of lands or minerals be made prior to fifteen days after the report of the public hearings are made available to the public in general.

(c) If the corporation authorizes the staff to proceed with consideration of the lease or sale under the terms of this article, all requirements of this section shall be completed within one year of date of the authorization by the corporation.