

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §5a-11-6

§5A-11-6. Competitive bidding and notice requirements before the development or extraction of minerals on certain lands; related standards.

(a) The corporation may enter into a lease or contract for the development of minerals, including, but not limited to, coal, gas, oil, sand or gravel on or under lands in which the corporation holds any right, title or interest: Provided, That no lease or contract may be entered into for the extraction and removal of minerals by surface mining or auger mining of coal: Provided, however, That the corporation or the state agencies, institutions or departments for which it is acting will not be required to post any type of surety or performance bond with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection or any other state agency when executing a lease for the development of minerals.

(b) With the exception of deep mining operations which are already in progress and permitted as of July 5, 1989, the extraction of coal by deep mining methods under state forests or wildlife refuges may be permitted only if the lease or contract provides that no entries, portals, air shafts or other incursions upon and into the land incident to the mining operations may be placed or constructed upon the lands or within three thousand feet of its boundary.

(c) Any lease or contract entered into by the corporation for the development of minerals shall reserve to the state all rights to subjacent surface support with which the state is seized or possessed at the time of such lease or contract.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of the code to the contrary, nothing herein may be construed to permit extraction of minerals by any method from, on or under any state park or state recreation area, nor the extraction of minerals by strip or auger mining upon any state forest or wildlife refuge.

(e) The corporation may enter into a lease or contract for the development of minerals where the lease or contract is not prohibited by any other provisions of this code, only after receiving sealed bids therefor, after notice by publication as a Class II legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty-nine of this code. The area for publication shall be each county in which the minerals are located.

(f) The minerals so advertised may be leased or contracted for development at not less than the fair market value, as determined by an appraisal made by an independent person or firm chosen by the corporation, to the highest responsible bidder, who shall give bond for the proper performance of the contract or lease as the corporation designates: Provided, That the corporation may reject any and all bids and to readvertise for bids.

(g) If the provisions of this section have been complied with, and no bid equal to or in excess of the fair market value is received, the corporation may, at any time during a period of six

months after the opening of the bids, lease or contract for the development of the minerals, but the lease or contract price may not be less than the fair market value.

(h) Any lease or contract for the development of minerals entered into after the effective date of this section shall be made in accordance with the provisions of this section and section five of this article.

(i) The corporation will consult with the office of the Attorney General to assist the corporation in carrying out the provisions of this section.

(j) The corporation shall consult with an independent mineral consultant and any other competent third parties with experience and expertise in the leasing of minerals, to assist the corporation in carrying out the provisions of this section, including determining fair market value and negotiating terms and conditions of mineral leases.

(k) Once the lessee commences the production of minerals and royalties become due and are paid to the Public Land Corporation, the Public Land Corporation shall hire an independent auditing firm to periodically review the lessee's books and accounts for compliance of payment of appropriate royalties due the Public Land Corporation for its minerals as produced under the lease agreement.