WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 5b ARTICLE 3

WV Legislature

§5B-3-1. Legislative intent.

(a) West Virginia: A shared vision statement. -- West Virginia's strong commitment to future generations has created a vibrant and diverse economy balancing quality jobs and the state's irreplaceable natural beauty. West Virginia has a highly skilled and educated workforce, is a leader in innovation and offers an excellent quality of life for all residents.

(b) "West Virginia: A vision shared" vision statement is meant to be used as a touchstone to ensure that actions being undertaken are in line and on course.

(c) It is the intent of the Legislature to set economic development goals for the state and that the joint commission on economic development, created in this article, use the goals in bringing all agencies performing economic development and workforce investment activities together to improve the economic situation in this state.

(d) Furthermore, it is the intent of the Legislature that the state work toward accomplishing three overall goals:

(1) The development of a comprehensive statewide economic development strategy;

(2) The effective statewide coordination of economic development programs; and

(3) The development of meaningful agency and program benchmarks and performance-based evaluations.

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§5B-3-2. The Joint Commission on Economic Development.

(a) The joint commission on economic development is hereby continued. The commission shall be comprised of an equal number of senators and delegates, as appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates.

The commission may explore how West Virginia can:

(1) Invest in systems that build workforce skills and promote lifelong learning to ensure a competitive workforce;

(2) Enhance the infrastructure, communications and transportation needed to support the knowledge-based industries and electronic commerce;

(3) Reorganize government to deliver services more efficiently, using technology, privatization and partnerships with the private sector;

(4) Align state tax systems to meet the demands of the twenty-first century economy;

(5) Develop more uniform regulatory and tax systems to reduce complexity, eliminate market distortions and better protect consumers;

(6) Support entrepreneurs by streamlining business regulations, providing timely decisions and assisting firms in their search for venture capital;

(7) Promote university policies that encourage research and development and build intellectual infrastructure;

(8) Address quality-of-life concerns to attract new businesses and workers; and

(9) Accomplish the goals set forth in this article and any other goal related to economic development or workforce investment that the commission considers important.

(b) The commission may propose legislation necessary to accomplish its goals.

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§5B-3-3. Reexamination of vision and goals.

Every fourth year after January 1, 2001, the joint commission on economic development, established pursuant to this article, shall conduct a thorough examination of the vision and goals set forth in this article and may recommend legislation relating to the vision and goals to the Legislature.

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§5B-3-4. Commission review of procedural rules, interpretive rules and existing legislative rules.

(a) The Joint Commission on Economic Development may review any procedural rule, interpretive rule or existing legislative rule and make recommendations concerning the rules to the Legislature.

(b) The Development Office and the Tourism Commission established pursuant to article two of this chapter, the Economic Development Authority established pursuant to article fifteen, chapter thirty-one of this code, the Bureau of Employment Programs established pursuant to article four, chapter twenty-one-a of this code, the Workers' Compensation Commission established pursuant to article one, chapter twenty-three of this code, the Workforce Investment Commission established pursuant to article two-c of this chapter, West Virginia Jobs Investment Trust, regional planning and development councils, West Virginia Rural Development Council, Office of Technology and West Virginia Clearinghouse for Workforce Education shall each file a copy of its legislative rules with the Commission as provided for in this section. Each agency that proposes legislative rules in accordance to the provisions of article three, three-a or three-b, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code relating to economic development or workforce development shall file the rules with the Joint Commission at the time the rules are filed with the Secretary of State prior to the public comment period or public hearing required in said chapter.

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§5B-3-5. Joint Commission on Economic Development Studies.

(a) The Joint Commission on Economic Development shall study the following:

(1) The feasibility of establishing common regional configurations for local workforce investment areas, regional educational service agencies and for all other purposes the Commission considers feasible. The study should review the existing levels of cooperation between state and local economic developers, complete an analysis of possible regional configurations and outline examples of other successful regional systems or networks found throughout the world. If the study determines that the common regional configurations are feasible, the Commission shall recommend legislation establishing common regional designations for all feasible purposes. In making the designation of regional areas, the study shall take into consideration, but not be limited to, the following:

(A) Geographic areas served by local educational agencies and intermediate educational agencies;

(B) Geographic areas served by post-secondary educational institutions and area vocational education schools;

(C) The extent to which the local areas are consistent with labor market areas;

(D) The distance that individuals will need to travel to receive services provided in the local areas; and

(E) The resources of the local areas that are available to effectively administer the activities or programs;

(2) The effectiveness and fiscal impact of incentives for attracting and growing businesses, especially technology-intensive companies; and

(3) A comprehensive review of West Virginia's existing economic and community development resources and the recommendation of an organizational structure, including, but not limited to, the reorganization of the Department of Commerce and the Development Office that would allow the state to successfully compete in the new global economy.

(b) In order to effectuate in the most cost-effective and efficient manner the studies required in this article, it is necessary for the Joint Commission to assemble and compile a tremendous amount of information. The Development Office will assist the Joint Commission in the collection and analysis of this information. The Tourism Commission established pursuant to article two of this chapter, the Economic Development Authority established pursuant to article fifteen, chapter thirty-one of this code, the Bureau of Employment Programs established pursuant to article four, chapter twenty-one-a of this code, the Workers' Compensation Commission established pursuant to article one, chapter twenty-three of this code, the Workforce Investment Commission established pursuant to article two-c of this chapter, West Virginia Jobs Investment Trust, Regional Planning and

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Development Councils, West Virginia Rural Development Council, Office of Technology and West Virginia Clearinghouse for Workforce Education shall provide a copy of their annual reports as submitted to the Governor in accordance with the requirements set forth in section twenty, article one, chapter five of this code to the West Virginia Development Office. The Development Office shall review, analyze and summarize the data contained in the reports, including its own annual report, and annually submit its findings to the Joint Commission on or before December 31.

(c) The Legislative Auditor shall provide to the Joint Commission a copy of any and all reports on agencies listed in subsection (b) of this section, which are required under article ten, chapter four of this code.

(d) The Joint Commission shall complete the studies set forth in this section and any other studies the Joint Commission determines to undertake prior to December 1, of each year and may make recommendations, including recommended legislation for introduction during the regular session of the Legislature.

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