WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2002

ENROLLED

House Bill No. 4619
(By Delegate Staton)

Passed March 9, 2002
In Effect Ninety Days from Passage
ENROLLED

H. B. 4619

(BY DELEGATE STATON)

[Passed March 9, 2002; in effect ninety days from passage.]

AN ACT to amend and reenact sections one-c, two, three, five, seven, eight, nine, fourteen, eighteen-a and twenty-four, article thirteen-a, chapter sixteen of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, all relating to establishment of stormwater systems and associated stormwater management programs within a public service district; general purpose of districts, including authority for stormwater systems and stormwater management programs, excluding drainage easements or stormwater facilities owned or operated by the West Virginia division of highways; creation of districts by county commission; providing for contracts between a public service district and a city, town or other municipal corporation to furnish stormwater services; allowing a general manager of a municipal stormwater system or a public service district to provide professional management to another public service district purchasing services from such municipal system or district; acquisition, construction, operation and extension of stormwater systems and stormwater management programs by a public service district; right of eminent domain; service rates, fees and charges for stormwater
service; authority to charge rates, fees and charges after thirty days notice of availability of a stormwater system; liens for delinquent fees; cost of properties acquired; sale, lease or rental of stormwater system; and acceptance of loans, grants and temporary advances.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That sections one-c, two, three, five, seven, eight, nine, fourteen, eighteen-a and twenty-four, article thirteen-a, chapter sixteen of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:

ARTICLE 13A. PUBLIC SERVICE DISTRICTS FOR WATER, SEWERAGE AND GAS SERVICES.

§16-13A-1c. General purpose of districts.

Any territory constituting the whole or any part of one or more counties in the state so situated that the construction or acquisition by purchase or otherwise and the maintenance, operation, improvement and extension of, properties supplying water, sewerage or stormwater services or gas distribution services or all of these within such territory, will be conducive to the preservation of the public health, comfort and convenience of such area, may be constituted a public service district under and in the manner provided by this article. The words “public service properties,” when used in this article, shall mean and include any facility used or to be used for or in connection with: (1) The diversion, development, pumping, impounding, treatment, storage, distribution or furnishing of water to or for the public for industrial, public, private or other uses (herein sometimes referred to as “water facilities”); (2) the collection, treatment, purification or disposal of liquid or solid wastes, sewage or industrial wastes (herein sometimes referred to as “sewer facilities” or “landfills”); (3) the distribution or the furnishing of natural gas to the public for industrial, public,
private or other uses (herein sometimes referred to as “gas utilities or gas system”); or (4) the collection, control or disposal of stormwater (herein sometimes referred to as “stormwater system” or “stormwater systems”), or (5) the management, operation, maintenance and control of stormwater and stormwater systems (herein sometimes referred to as “stormwater management program” or “stormwater management programs”). As used in this article “stormwater system” or “stormwater systems” means a stormwater system in its entirety or any integral part thereof used to collect, control or dispose of stormwater, and includes all facilities, structures and natural water courses used for collecting and conducting stormwater to, through and from drainage areas to the points of final outlet including, but not limited to, any and all of the following: Inlets, conduits, outlets, channels, ponds, drainage easements, water quality facilities, catch basins, ditches, streams, gulches, flumes, culverts, siphons, retention or detention basins, dams, floodwalls, pipes, flood control systems, levies and pumping stations: Provided, That the term “stormwater system” or “stormwater systems” does not include highways, road and drainage easements, or stormwater facilities constructed, owned or operated by the West Virginia division of highways. As used in this article “stormwater management program” or “stormwater management programs” means those activities associated with the management, operation, maintenance and control of stormwater and stormwater systems, and includes, but is not limited to, public education, stormwater and surface runoff water quality improvement, mapping, planning, flood control, inspection, enforcement and any other activities required by state and federal law: Provided, however, That the term “stormwater management program” or “stormwater management programs” does not include those activities associated with the management, operation, maintenance and control of highways, road and drainage easements, or stormwater facilities constructed, owned or operated by the West
§16-13A-2. Creation of districts by county commission; enlarging, reducing, merging, or dissolving district; consolidation; agreements, etc.; infringing upon powers of county commission; filing list of members and districts with the secretary of state.

(a) The county commission of any county may propose the creation, enlargement, reduction, merger, dissolution, or consolidation of a public service district by any of the following methods: (1) On its own motion by order duly adopted, (2) upon the recommendation of the public service commission, or (3) by petition of twenty-five percent of the registered voters who reside within the limits of the proposed public service district within one or more counties. The petition shall contain a description, including metes and bounds, sufficient to identify the territory to be embraced therein and the name of such proposed district: Provided, That after the effective date of this section, no new public service district shall be created, enlarged, reduced, merged, dissolved or consolidated under this section without the written consent and approval of the public service commission, which approval and consent shall be in accordance with rules promulgated by the public service commission and may only be requested after consent is given by the appropriate county commission or commissions pursuant to this section. Any territory may be included regardless of whether or not the territory includes one or more cities, incorporated towns or other municipal corporations which own and operate any public service properties and regardless of whether or not it includes one or more cities, incorporated towns or other municipal corporations being served by privately owned public service properties: Provided, however, That the same territory shall not be included within the boundaries of more than one public service district except where the territory
or part thereof is included within the boundaries of a separate public service district organized to supply water, sewerage services, stormwater services or gas facilities not being furnished within such territory or part thereof: Provided further, That no city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation shall be included within the boundaries of the proposed district except upon the adoption of a resolution of the governing body of the city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation consenting.

(b) The petition shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the county commission of the county in which the territory to constitute the proposed district is situated, and if the territory is situated in more than one county, then the petition shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the county commission of the county in which the major portion of the territory extends, and a copy thereof (omitting signatures) shall be filed with each of the clerks of the county commission of the other county or counties into which the territory extends. The clerk of the county commission receiving such petition shall present it to the county commission of the county at the first regular meeting after the filing or at a special meeting called for the consideration thereof.

(c) When the county commission of any county enters an order on its own motion proposing the creation, enlargement, reduction, merger, dissolution or consolidation of a public service district, as aforesaid, or when a petition for the creation is presented, as aforesaid, the county commission shall at the same session fix a date of hearing in the county on the creation, enlargement, reduction, merger, dissolution or consolidation of the proposed public service district, which date so fixed shall be not more than forty days nor less than twenty days from the date of the action. If the territory proposed to be included is situated in more than one county, the county commission, when fixing a date of hearing, shall provide for notifying the county
commission and clerk thereof of each of the other counties into which the territory extends of the date so fixed. The clerk of the county commission of each county in which any territory in the proposed public service district is located shall cause notice of the hearing and the time and place thereof, and setting forth a description of all of the territory proposed to be included therein to be given by publication as a Class I legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty-nine of this code, and the publication area for the publication shall be by publication in each city, incorporated town or municipal corporation if available in each county in which any territory in the proposed public service district is located. The publication shall be at least ten days prior to the hearing.

(d) In all cases where proceedings for the creation, enlargement, reduction, merger, dissolution or consolidation of the public service districts are initiated by petition as aforesaid, the person filing the petition shall advance or satisfactorily indemnify the payment of the cost and expenses of publishing the hearing notice, and otherwise the costs and expenses of the notice shall be paid in the first instance by the county commission out of contingent funds or any other funds available or made available for that purpose. In addition to the notice required herein to be published, there shall also be posted in at least five conspicuous places in the proposed public service district, a notice containing the same information as is contained in the published notice. The posted notices shall be posted not less than ten days before the hearing.

(e) All persons residing in or owning or having any interest in property in the proposed public service district shall have an opportunity to be heard for and against its creation, enlargement, reduction, merger, dissolution or consolidation. At the hearing the county commission before which the hearing is conducted shall consider and determine the feasibility of the creation, enlargement, reduction, merger, dissolution or
consolidation of the proposed district. If the county commission
determines that the construction or acquisition by purchase or
otherwise and maintenance, operation, improvement and
extension of public service properties by the public service
district will be conducive to the preservation of public health,
comfort and convenience of such area, the county commission
shall by order create, enlarge, reduce, merge, dissolve or
consolidate such public service district. If the county commis-
sion, after due consideration, determines that the proposed
district will not be conducive to the preservation of public
health, comfort or convenience of the area or that the creation,
enlargement, reduction, merger, dissolution or consolidation of
the proposed district as set forth and described in the petition or
order is not feasible, it may refuse to enter an order creating the
district or it may enter an order amending the description of the
proposed district and create, enlarge, reduce, merge, dissolve or
consolidate the district as amended.

(f) If the county commission determines that any other
public service district or districts can adequately serve the area
of the proposed public service district, whether by enlargement,
enlargement, reduction, merger, dissolution or consolidation, it shall refuse
to enter the order, but shall enter an order creating, enlarging,
reducing, merging, dissolving or consolidating the area with an
existing public service district, in accordance with rules adopted
by the public service commission for such purpose: Provided,
That no enlargement of a public service district may occur if the
present or proposed physical facilities of the public service
district are determined by the appropriate county commission
or the public service commission to be inadequate to provide
such enlarged service. The clerk of the county commission of
each county into which any part of such district extends shall
retain in his office an authentic copy of the order creating,
enlarging, reducing, merging, dissolving or consolidating the
district: Provided, however, That within ten days after the entry
of an order creating, enlarging, reducing, merging, dissolving
or consolidating a district, such order must be filed for review and approval by the public service commission. The public service commission shall provide a hearing in the affected county on the matter and may approve, reject or modify the order of the county commission if it finds it is in the best interests of the public to do so. The public service commission shall adopt rules relating to such filings and the approval, disapproval or modification of county commission orders for creating, enlarging, merging, dissolving or consolidating districts. The provisions of this section shall not apply to the implementation by a county commission of an order issued by the public service commission pursuant to this section and section one-b, of this article.

(g) The county commission may, if in its discretion it deems it necessary, feasible and proper, enlarge the district to include additional areas, reduce the area of the district, where facilities, equipment, service or materials have not been extended, or dissolve the district if inactive or create or consolidate two or more such districts. If consolidation of districts is not feasible, the county commission may consolidate and centralize management and administration of districts within its county or multi-county area to achieve efficiency of operations:

Provided, That where the county commission determines on its own motion by order entered of record, or there is a petition to enlarge the district, merge and consolidate districts, or the management and administration thereof, reduce the area of the district or dissolve the district if inactive, all of the applicable provisions of this article providing for hearing, notice of hearing and approval by the public service commission shall apply. The commission shall at all times attempt to bring about the enlargement or merger of existing public service districts in order to provide increased services and to eliminate the need for creation of new public service districts in those areas which are not currently serviced by a public service district: Provided, however, That where two or more public service districts are
consolidated pursuant to this section, any rate differentials may continue for the period of bonded indebtedness incurred prior to consolidation. The districts may not enter into any agreement, contract or covenant that infringes upon, impairs, abridges or usurps the duties, rights or powers of the county commission, as set forth in this article, or conflicts with any provision of this article.

(h) A list of all districts and their current board members shall be filed by the county commission with the secretary of state and the public service commission by the first day of July of each year.

§16-13A-3. District to be a public corporation and political subdivision; powers thereof; public service boards.

From and after the date of the adoption of the order creating any public service district, it is a public corporation and political subdivision of the state, but without any power to levy or collect ad valorem taxes. Each district may acquire, own and hold property, both real and personal, in its corporate name, and may sue, may be sued, may adopt an official seal and may enter into contracts necessary or incidental to its purposes, including contracts with any city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation located within or without its boundaries for furnishing wholesale supply of water for the distribution system of the city, town or other municipal corporation, or for furnishing stormwater services for the city, town or other municipal corporation, and contract for the operation, maintenance, servicing, repair and extension of any properties owned by it or for the operation and improvement or extension by the district of all or any part of the existing municipally owned public service properties of any city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation included within the district: Provided, That no contract shall extend beyond a maximum of forty years,
but provisions may be included therein for a renewal or successive renewals thereof and shall conform to and comply with the rights of the holders of any outstanding bonds issued by the municipalities for the public service properties.

The powers of each public service district shall be vested in and exercised by a public service board consisting of not less than three members, who shall be persons residing within the district, who possess certain educational, business or work experience which will be conducive to operating a public service district. Each board member shall, within six months of taking office, successfully complete the training program to be established and administered by the public service commission in conjunction with the division of environmental protection and the bureau of public health. Board members shall not be or become pecuniarily interested, directly or indirectly, in the proceeds of any contract or service, or in furnishing any supplies or materials to the district nor shall a former board member be hired by the district in any capacity within a minimum of twelve months after board member’s term has expired or such board member has resigned from the district board. The members shall be appointed in the following manner:

Each city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation having a population of more than three thousand but less than eighteen thousand is entitled to appoint one member of the board, and each city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation having a population in excess of eighteen thousand shall be entitled to appoint one additional member of the board for each additional eighteen thousand population. The members of the board representing such cities, incorporated towns or other municipal corporations shall be residents thereof and shall be appointed by a resolution of the governing bodies thereof and upon the filing of a certified copy or copies of the resolution or resolutions in the office of the clerk of the county
commission which entered the order creating the district, the
persons so appointed become members of the board without any
further act or proceedings. If the number of members of the
board so appointed by the governing bodies of cities, incorpo-
rated towns or other municipal corporations included in the
district equals or exceeds three, then no further members shall
be appointed to the board and the members so appointed are the
board of the district except in cases of merger or consolidation
where the number of board members may equal five.

If no city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation
having a population of more than three thousand is included
within the district, then the county commission which entered
the order creating the district shall appoint three members of the
board, who are persons residing within the district and residing
within the state of West Virginia, which three members become
members of the board of the district without any further act or
proceedings except in cases of merger or consolidation where
the number of board members may equal five.

If the number of members of the board appointed by the
governing bodies of cities, incorporated towns or other munici-
pal corporations included within the district is less than three,
then the county commission which entered the order creating
the district shall appoint such additional member or members
of the board, who are persons residing within the district, as is
necessary to make the number of members of the board equal
three except in cases of merger or consolidation where the
number of board members may equal five, and the member or
members appointed by the governing bodies of the cities,
incorporated towns or other municipal corporations included
within the district and the additional member or members
appointed by the county commission as aforesaid, are the board
of the district. A person may serve as a member of the board in
one or more public service districts.
The population of any city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation, for the purpose of determining the number of members of the board, if any, to be appointed by the governing body or bodies thereof, is the population stated for such city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation in the last official federal census.

Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, whenever a district is consolidated or merged pursuant to section two of this article, the terms of office of the existing board members shall end on the effective date of the merger or consolidation. The county commission shall appoint a new board according to rules promulgated by the public service commission. Whenever districts are consolidated or merged no provision of this code prohibits the expansion of membership on the new board to five.

The respective terms of office of the members of the first board shall be fixed by the county commission and shall be as equally divided as may be, that is approximately one third of the members for a term of two years, a like number for a term of four years, the term of the remaining member or members for six years, from the first day of the month during which the appointments are made. The first members of the board appointed as aforesaid shall meet at the office of the clerk of the county commission which entered the order creating the district as soon as practicable after the appointments and shall qualify by taking an oath of office: Provided, That any member or members of the board may be removed from their respective office as provided in section three-a of this article.

Any vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term within thirty days, otherwise successor members of the board shall be appointed for terms of six years and the terms of office shall continue until successors have been appointed and qualified. All successor members shall be appointed in the same manner
as the member succeeded was appointed. The district shall provide to the public service commission, within thirty days of the appointment, the following information: The new board member’s name, home address, home and office phone numbers, date of appointment, length of term, who the new member replaces and if the new appointee has previously served on the board. The public service commission shall notify each new board member of the legal obligation to attend training as prescribed in this section.

The board shall organize within thirty days following the first appointments and annually thereafter at its first meeting after the first day of January of each year by selecting one of its members to serve as chair and by appointing a secretary and a treasurer who need not be members of the board. The secretary shall keep a record of all proceedings of the board which shall be available for inspection as other public records. Duplicate records shall be filed with the county commission and shall include the minutes of all board meetings. The treasurer is lawful custodian of all funds of the public service district and shall pay same out on orders authorized or approved by the board. The secretary and treasurer shall perform other duties appertaining to the affairs of the district and shall receive salaries as shall be prescribed by the board. The treasurer shall furnish bond in an amount to be fixed by the board for the use and benefit of the district.

The members of the board, and the chair, secretary and treasurer thereof, shall make available to the county commission, at all times, all of its books and records pertaining to the district’s operation, finances and affairs, for inspection and audit. The board shall meet at least monthly.

§16-13A-5. General manager of board.
The board may employ a general manager to serve a term of not more than five years and until his or her successor is employed, and his or her compensation shall be fixed by resolution of the board. Such general manager shall devote all or the required portion of his or her time to the affairs of the district and may employ, discharge and fix the compensation of all employees of the district, except as in this article otherwise provided, and he or she shall perform and exercise such other powers and duties as may be conferred upon him or her by the board.

Such general manager shall be chosen without regard to his or her political affiliations and upon the sole basis of his or her administrative and technical qualifications to manage public service properties and affairs of the district and he or she may be discharged only upon the affirmative vote of two thirds of the board. Such general manager need not be a resident of the district at the time he or she is chosen. Such general manager may not be a member of the board but shall be an employee of the board.

The board of any public service district which purchases water, sewer or stormwater service from a municipal water, sewer or stormwater system or another public service district may, as an alternative to hiring its own general manager, elect to permit the general manager of the municipal water, sewer or stormwater system or public service district from which such water, sewer or stormwater service is purchased provide professional management to the district, if the appropriate municipality or public service board agrees to provide such assistance. The general manager shall receive reasonable compensation for such service.

§16-13A-7. Acquisition and operation of district properties.
The board of such districts shall have the supervision and
close control of all public service properties acquired or constructed
by the district, and shall have the power, and it shall be its duty,
to maintain, operate, extend and improve the same, including,
but not limited to, those activities necessary to comply with all
federal and state requirements, including water quality im-
provement activities. All contracts involving the expenditure by
the district of more than fifteen thousand dollars for construc-
tion work or for the purchase of equipment and improvements,
extensions or replacements, shall be entered into only after
notice inviting bids shall have been published as a Class I legal
advertisement in compliance with the provision of article three,
chapter fifty-nine of this code, and the publication area for such
publication shall be as specified in section two of this article in
the county or counties in which the district is located. The
publication shall not be less than ten days prior to the making
of any such contract. To the extent allowed by law, in-state
contractors shall be given first priority in awarding public
service district contracts. It shall be the duty of the board to
ensure that local in-state labor shall be utilized to the greatest
extent possible when hiring laborers for public service district
construction or maintenance repair jobs. It shall further be the
duty of the board to encourage contractors to use American
made products in their construction to the extent possible. Any
obligations incurred of any kind or character shall not in any
event constitute or be deemed an indebtedness within the
meaning of any of the provisions or limitations of the constitu-
tion, but all such obligations shall be payable solely and only
out of revenues derived from the operation of the public service
properties of the district or from proceeds of bonds issued as
hereinafter provided. No continuing contract for the purchase
of materials or supplies or for furnishing the district with
electrical energy or power shall be entered into for a longer
period than fifteen years.
§16-13A-8. Acquisition and purchase of public service properties; right of eminent domain; extraterritorial powers.

The board may acquire any publicly or privately owned public service properties located within the boundaries of the district regardless of whether or not all or any part of such properties are located within the corporate limits of any city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation included within the district and may purchase and acquire all rights and franchises and any and all property within or outside the district necessary or incidental to the purpose of the district.

The board may construct any public service properties within or outside the district necessary or incidental to its purposes and each such district may acquire, construct, maintain and operate any such public service properties within the corporate limits of any city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation included within the district or in any unincorporated territory within ten miles of the territorial boundaries of the district: Provided, That if any incorporated city, town or other municipal corporation included within the district owns and operates either water facilities, sewer facilities, stormwater facilities or gas facilities or all of these, then the district may not acquire, construct, establish, improve or extend any public service properties of the same kind within such city, incorporated towns or other municipal corporations or the adjacent unincorporated territory served by such cities, incorporated towns or other municipal corporations, except upon the approval of the public service commission, the consent of such cities, incorporated towns or other municipal corporations and in conformity and compliance with the rights of the holders of any revenue bonds or obligations theretofore issued by such cities, incorporated towns or other municipal corporations then outstanding and in accordance with the ordinance, resolution or other proceedings which authorize the issuance of such revenue bonds or obligations.
Whenever such district has constructed, acquired or established water facilities, sewer facilities, a stormwater system, stormwater management program or gas facilities for water, sewer, stormwater or gas services within any city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation included within a district, then such city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation may not thereafter construct, acquire or establish any facilities of the same kind within such city, incorporated town or other municipal corporation without the consent of such district.

For the purpose of acquiring any public service properties or lands, rights or easements deemed necessary or incidental for the purposes of the district, each such district has the right of eminent domain to the same extent and to be exercised in the same manner as now or hereafter provided by law for such right of eminent domain by cities, incorporated towns and other municipal corporations: Provided, That the power of eminent domain provided in this section does not extend to highways, road and drainage easements, or stormwater facilities constructed, owned or operated by the West Virginia division of highways without the express agreement of the commissioner of highways: Provided, however, That such board may not acquire all or any substantial part of a privately owned waterworks system unless and until authorized so to do by the public service commission of West Virginia, and that this section shall not be construed to authorize any district to acquire through condemnation proceedings either in whole or substantial part an existing privately owned waterworks plant or system or gas facilities located in or furnishing water or gas service within such district or extensions made or to be made by it in territory contiguous to such existing plant or system, nor may any such board construct or extend its public service properties to supply its services into areas served by or in competition with existing waterworks or gas facilities or extensions made or to be made
67 in territory contiguous to such existing plant or system by the
68 owner thereof.

§16-13A-9. Rules; service rates and charges; discontinuance of
service; required water and sewer connections;
lien for delinquent fees.

1 The board may make, enact and enforce all needful rules in
2 connection with the acquisition, construction, improvement,
3 extension, management, maintenance, operation, care, protec-
4 tion and the use of any public service properties owned or
5 controlled by the district, and the board shall establish rates,
6 fees and charges for the services and facilities it furnishes,
7 which shall be sufficient at all times, notwithstanding the
8 provisions of any other law or laws, to pay the cost of mainte-
9 nance, operation and depreciation of such public service
10 properties and principal of and interest on all bonds issued,
11 other obligations incurred under the provisions of this article
12 and all reserve or other payments provided for in the proceed-
13 ings which authorized the issuance of any bonds hereunder. The
14 schedule of such rates, fees and charges may be based upon
15 either (a) the consumption of water or gas on premises con-
16 nected with such facilities, taking into consideration domestic,
17 commercial, industrial and public use of water and gas; or (b)
18 the number and kind of fixtures connected with such facilities
19 located on the various premises; or (c) the number of persons
20 served by such facilities; or (d) any combination thereof; or (e)
21 may be determined on any other basis or classification which
22 the board may determine to be fair and reasonable, taking into
23 consideration the location of the premises served and the nature
24 and extent of the services and facilities furnished. However, no
25 rates, fees or charges for stormwater services may be assessed
26 against highways, road and drainage easements, or stormwater
27 facilities constructed, owned or operated by the West Virginia
28 division of highways. Where water, sewer, stormwater or gas
29 services, or any combination thereof, are all furnished to any
premises, the schedule of charges may be billed as a single amount for the aggregate thereof. The board shall require all users of services and facilities furnished by the district to designate on every application for service whether the applicant is a tenant or an owner of the premises to be served. If the applicant is a tenant, he or she shall state the name and address of the owner or owners of the premises to be served by the district. All new applicants for service shall deposit a minimum of fifty dollars with the district to secure the payment of service rates, fees and charges in the event they become delinquent as provided in this section. In any case where a deposit is forfeited to pay service rates, fees and charges which were delinquent at the time of disconnection or termination of service, no reconnection or reinstatement of service may be made by the district until another minimum deposit of fifty dollars has been remitted to the district. Whenever any rates, fees, rentals or charges for services or facilities furnished remain unpaid for a period of thirty days after the same become due and payable, the property and the owner thereof, as well as the user of the services and facilities provided are delinquent and the owner, user and property are liable at law until such time as all such rates, fees and charges are fully paid: Provided, That the property owner shall be given notice of any said delinquency by certified mail, return receipt requested. The board may, under reasonable rules promulgated by the public service commission, shut off and discontinue water or gas services to all delinquent users of either water or gas facilities, or both: Provided, however, That upon written request of the owner or owners of the premises, the board shall shut off and discontinue water and gas services where any rates, fees, rentals, or charges for services or facilities remain unpaid by the user of the premises for a period of sixty days after the same became due and payable.

In the event that any publicly or privately owned utility, city, incorporated town, other municipal corporation or other
public service district included within the district owns and
operates separately either water facilities or sewer facilities, and
the district owns and operates the other kind of facilities, either
water or sewer, as the case may be, then the district and such
publicly or privately owned utility, city, incorporated town or
other municipal corporation or other public service district shall
covenant and contract with each other to shut off and discon-
tinue the supplying of water service for the nonpayment of
sewer service fees and charges: Provided, That any contracts
entered into by a public service district pursuant to this section
shall be submitted to the public service commission for
approval. Any public service district providing water and sewer
service to its customers has the right to terminate water service
for delinquency in payment of either water or sewer bills.
Where one public service district is providing sewer service and
another public service district or a municipality included within
the boundaries of the sewer district is providing water service,
and the district providing sewer service experiences a delin-
quency in payment, the district or the municipality included
within the boundaries of the sewer district that is providing
water service, upon the request of the district providing sewer
service to the delinquent account, shall terminate its water
service to the customer having the delinquent sewer account:
Provided, however, That any termination of water service must
comply with all rules and orders of the public service commis-
sion.

Any district furnishing sewer facilities within the district
may require, or may by petition to the circuit court of the
county in which the property is located, compel or may require
the bureau of public health to compel all owners, tenants or
occupants of any houses, dwellings and buildings located near
any such sewer facilities, where sewage will flow by gravity or
be transported by such other methods approved by the bureau
of public health including, but not limited to, vacuum and
pressure systems, approved under the provisions of section
nine, article one, chapter sixteen of this code, from such houses, dwellings or buildings into such sewer facilities, to connect with and use such sewer facilities, and to cease the use of all other means for the collection, treatment and disposal of sewage and waste matters from such houses, dwellings and buildings where there is such gravity flow or transportation by such other methods approved by the bureau of public health including, but not limited to, vacuum and pressure systems, approved under the provisions of section nine, article one, chapter sixteen of this code, and such houses, dwellings and buildings can be adequately served by the sewer facilities of the district, and it is hereby found, determined and declared that the mandatory use of such sewer facilities provided for in this paragraph is necessary and essential for the health and welfare of the inhabitants and residents of such districts and of the state: Provided, That if the public service district determines that the property owner must connect with the sewer facilities even when sewage from such dwellings may not flow to the main line by gravity and the property owner must incur costs for any changes in the existing dwellings' exterior plumbing in order to connect to the main sewer line, the public service district board shall authorize the district to pay all reasonable costs for such changes in the exterior plumbing, including, but not limited to, installation, operation, maintenance and purchase of a pump, or any other method approved by the bureau of public health; maintenance and operation costs for such extra installation should be reflected in the users charge for approval of the public service commission. The circuit court shall adjudicate the merits of such petition by summary hearing to be held not later than thirty days after service of petition to the appropriate owners, tenants or occupants.

Whenever any district has made available sewer facilities to any owner, tenant or occupant of any house, dwelling or building located near such sewer facility, and the engineer for the district has certified that such sewer facilities are available
to and are adequate to serve such owner, tenant or occupant, and sewage will flow by gravity or be transported by such other methods approved by the bureau of public health from such house, dwelling or building into such sewer facilities, the district may charge, and such owner, tenant or occupant shall pay the rates and charges for services established under this article only after thirty-day notice of the availability of the facilities has been received by the owner.

Whenever any district has made available a stormwater system to any owner, tenant or occupant of any real property located near such stormwater system, and where stormwater from such real property affects or drains into such stormwater system, it is hereby found, determined and declared that such owner, tenant or occupant is being served by such stormwater system, and it is further hereby found, determined and declared that the mandatory use of such stormwater system is necessary and essential for the health and welfare of the inhabitants and residents of such district and of the state. The district may charge, and such owner, tenant or occupant shall pay the rates, fees and charges for stormwater services established under this article only after thirty-day notice of the availability of the stormwater system has been received by the owner.

All delinquent fees, rates and charges of the district for either water facilities, sewer facilities, stormwater systems or stormwater management systems or gas facilities are liens on the premises served of equal dignity, rank and priority with the lien on such premises of state, county, school and municipal taxes. In addition to the other remedies provided in this section, public service districts are hereby granted a deferral of filing fees or other fees and costs incidental to the bringing and maintenance of an action in magistrate court for the collection of delinquent water, sewer, stormwater or gas bills. If the district collects the delinquent account, plus reasonable costs, from its customer or other responsible party, the district shall
pay to the magistrate the normal filing fee and reasonable costs which were previously deferred. In addition, each public service district may exchange with other public service districts a list of delinquent accounts.

Anything in this section to the contrary notwithstanding, any establishment, as defined in section three, article eleven, chapter twenty-two, now or hereafter operating its own sewage disposal system pursuant to a permit issued by the division of environmental protection, as prescribed by section eleven, article eleven, chapter twenty-two of this code, is exempt from the provisions of this section.


The cost of any public service properties acquired under the provisions of this article shall be deemed to include the cost of the acquisition or construction thereof, the cost of all property rights, easements and franchises deemed necessary or convenient therefor and for the improvements and extensions thereto; for stormwater systems and associated stormwater management programs, those activities which include, but are not limited to, water quality improvement activities necessary to comply with all federal and state requirements; interest upon bonds prior to and during construction or acquisition and for six months after completion of construction or of acquisition of the improvements and extensions; engineering, fiscal agents and legal expenses; expenses for estimates of cost and of revenues, expenses for plans, specifications and surveys; other expenses necessary or incident to determining the feasibility or practicability of the enterprise, administrative expense, and such other expenses as may be necessary or incident to the financing herein authorized, and the construction or acquisition of the properties and the placing of same in operation, and the performance of the things herein required or permitted, in connection with any thereof.
§16-13A-18a. Sale, lease or rental of water, sewer, stormwater or gas system by district; distribution of proceeds.

In any case where a public service district owns a water, sewer, stormwater or gas system, and a majority of not less than sixty percent of the members of the public service board thereof deem it for the best interests of the district to sell, lease or rent such water, sewer, stormwater or gas system to any municipality or privately-owned water, sewer, stormwater or gas system, or to any water, sewer, stormwater or gas system owned by an adjacent public service district, the board may so sell, lease or rent such water, sewer, stormwater or gas system upon such terms and conditions as said board, in its discretion, considers in the best interests of the district: Provided, That such sale, leasing or rental may be made only upon: (1) The publication of notice of a hearing before the board of the public service district, as a Class I legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty-nine of this code, in a newspaper published and of general circulation in the county or counties wherein the district is located, such publication to be made not earlier than twenty days and not later than seven days prior to the hearing; (2) approval by the county commission or commissions of the county or counties in which the district operates; and (3) approval by the public service commission of West Virginia.

In the event of any such sale, the proceeds thereof, if any, remaining after payment of all outstanding bonds and other obligations of the district, shall be ratably distributed to any persons who have made contributions in aid of construction of such water, sewer, stormwater or gas system, such distribution not to exceed the actual amount of any such contribution, without interest, and any balance of funds thereafter remaining shall be paid to the county commission of the county in which the major portion of such water, sewer, stormwater or gas
Any public service district created pursuant to the provisions of this article is authorized and empowered to accept loans or grants and procure loans or temporary advances evidenced by notes or other negotiable instruments issued in the manner, and subject to the privileges and limitations, set forth with respect to bonds authorized to be issued under the provisions of this article, for the purpose of paying part or all of the cost of construction or acquisition of water systems, sewage systems, stormwater systems or stormwater management systems or gas facilities, or all of these, and the other purposes herein authorized, from any authorized agency or from the United States of America or any federal or public agency or department of the United States or any private agency, corporation or individual, which loans or temporary advances, including the interest thereon, may be repaid out of the proceeds of the bonds authorized to be issued under the provisions of this article, the revenues of the said water system, sewage system, stormwater system or associated stormwater management system or gas facilities, or grants to the public service district from any authorized agency or from the United States of America or any federal or public agency or department of the United States or from any private agency, corporation or individual or from any combination of such sources of payment, and to enter into the necessary contracts and agreements to carry out the purposes hereof with any authorized agency or the United States of America or any federal or public agency or department of the United States, or with any private agency, corporation or individual. Any other provisions of this article to the contrary notwithstanding, interest on any such loans or temporary advances may be paid from the proceeds thereof until the maturity of such notes or other negotiable instrument.
That Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chairman Senate Committee

Chairman House Committee

Originating in the House.

In effect ninety days from passage.

Clerk of the Senate

Clerk of the House of Delegates

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within approved this the 3rd day of April, 2002.