WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
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REGULAR SESSION, 2012

ENROLLED
COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
Senate Bill No. 562
(SENATORS KESSLER (MR. PRESIDENT), BEACH,
D. FACEMIRE, FANNING, HALL, HELMICK, PREZIOSO,
Plymale and Klempa, original sponsors)

[PASSED MARCH 10, 2012; IN EFFECT FROM PASSAGE.]
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[Passed March 10, 2012; in effect from passage.]

AN ACT to amend and reenact §22-11-7b of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to establishing a public policy for narrative water quality standards; establishing a procedure to determine compliance with the biologic component of the narrative water quality standard; and clarifying that narrative water quality rules cannot be less protective than current requirements.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §22-11-7b of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted to read as follows:

ARTICLE 11. WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT.

§22-11-7b. Water quality standards; implementation of anti-degradation procedures; procedure to determine compliance with the biologic component of the narrative water quality standard.
(a) All authority to promulgate rules and implement water quality standards is vested in the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection.

(b) All meetings with the secretary or any employee of the department and any interested party which are convened for the purpose of making a decision or deliberating toward a decision as to the form and substance of the rule governing water quality standards or variances thereto shall be held in accordance with the provisions of article nine-a, chapter six of this code. When the secretary is considering the form and substance of the rules governing water quality standards, the following are not meetings pursuant to article nine-a, chapter six of this code: (i) Consultations between the department’s employees or its consultants, contractors or agents; (ii) consultations with other state or federal agencies and the department’s employees or its consultants, contractors or agents; or (iii) consultations between the secretary, the department’s employees or its consultants, contractors or agents with any interested party for the purpose of collecting facts and explaining state and federal requirements relating to a site specific change or variance.

(c) In order to carry out the purposes of this chapter, the secretary shall promulgate legislative rules in accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code setting standards of water quality applicable to both the surface waters and groundwaters of this state. Standards of quality with respect to surface waters shall protect the public health and welfare, wildlife, fish and aquatic life and the present and prospective future uses of the water for domestic, agricultural, industrial, recreational, scenic and other legitimate beneficial uses thereof. The water quality standards of the secretary may not specify the design of equipment, type of construction or particular method which a person shall use to reduce the discharge of a pollut-

(d) The secretary shall establish the antidegradation implementation procedures as required by 40 C. F. R. 131.12(a) which apply to regulated activities that have the
potential to affect water quality. The secretary shall propose for legislative approval, pursuant to article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of the code, legislative rules to establish implementation procedures which include specifics of the review depending upon the existing uses of the water body segment that would be affected, the level of protection or “tier” assigned to the applicable water body segment, the nature of the activity and the extent to which existing water quality would be degraded. Any final classification determination of a water as a Tier 2.5 water (Water of Special Concern) does not become effective until that determination is approved by the Legislature through the legislative rule-making process as provided in article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of the code.

(e) All remining variances shall be applied for and considered by the secretary and any variance granted shall be consistent with 33 U. S. C. Section 1311(p) of the Federal Water Control Act. At a minimum, when considering an application for a remining variance the secretary shall consider the data and information submitted by the applicant for the variance; and comments received at a public comment period and public hearing. The secretary may not grant a variance without requiring the applicant to improve the instream water quality as much as is reasonably possible by applying best available technology economically achievable using best professional judgment. Any such requirement will be included as a permit condition. The secretary may not grant a variance without a demonstration by the applicant that the coal remining operation will result in the potential for improved instream water quality as a result of the remining operation. The secretary may not grant a variance where he or she determines that degradation of the instream water quality will result from the remining operation.

(f) The secretary shall propose rules measuring compliance with the biologic component of West Virginia’s narrative water quality standard requires evaluation of the holistic health of the aquatic ecosystem and a determination that the stream: (i) Supports a balanced aquatic community
that is diverse in species composition; (ii) contains appropriate trophic levels of fish, in streams that have flows sufficient to support fish populations; and (iii) the aquatic community is composed of benthic invertebrate assemblages sufficient to perform the biological functions necessary to support fish communities within the assessed reach, or, if the assessed reach has insufficient flows to support a fish community, in those downstream reaches where fish are present. The secretary shall propose rules for legislative approval in accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code that implement the provisions of this subsection. Rules promulgated pursuant to this subsection may not establish measurements for biologic components of West Virginia's narrative water quality standards that would establish standards less protective than requirements that exist at the time of enactment of the amendments to this subsection by the Legislature during the 2012 regular session.
The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chair on Senate Committee

Chairman House Committee

Originated in the Senate.

In effect from passage.

Clerk of the Senate

Clerk of the House of Delegates

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within is approved this the 2nd Day of April, 2012.

Governor
PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR

MAR 29 2012

Time 4:10 pm