

Senate Bill No. 499

(By Senators Laird, Tucker, Snyder, D. Facemire and Beach)

[Introduced February 11, 2011; referred to the Committee on
Economic Development; and then to the Committee on the
Judiciary.]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by
adding thereto a new article, designated §20-3C-1, §20-3C-2,
§20-3C-3, §20-3C-4 and §20-3C-5, all relating to zipline
regulation; establishing legislative purpose; defining terms;
setting forth duties of zipline operators; requiring liability
insurance; setting forth record-keeping requirements;
establishing responsibilities of participants; providing for
assumption of risks; setting forth prohibited acts; and
defining liability of zipline operators.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended
by adding thereto a new article, designated §20-3C-1, §20-3C-2,
§20-3C-3, §20-3C-4 and §20-3C-5, all to read as follows:

ARTICLE 3C. ZIPLINE/CANOPY TOUR RESPONSIBILITY ACT.

1 **§20-3C-1. Legislative purpose.**

2 (a) The Legislature finds that:

3 (1) The sport of ziplining and canopy touring is practiced by
4 a large number of citizens of West Virginia and also attracts to
5 West Virginia a large number of nonresidents, significantly
6 contributing to the economy of West Virginia; and

7 (2) There are inherent risks in the sport of ziplining and
8 canopy touring which should be understood by each participant and
9 which are essentially impossible to eliminate by the zipline or
10 canopy tour operator.

11 (b) The purpose of this article is to define those areas of
12 responsibility and affirmative acts for which zipline and canopy
13 tour operators shall be liable for loss, damage or injury and those
14 risks which the participant expressly assumes responsibility and
15 for which there can be no recovery.

16 **§20-3C-2. Definitions.**

17 As used in this article:

18 (1) "ACCT" means the Association for Challenge Course
19 Technology, Seventh Edition, or substantially equivalent standards.

20 (2) "Canopy tours" means a facility not located in an
21 amusement park or carnival which is a supervised or guided
22 educational or recreational activity including, but not limited to,
23 beams, bridges, cable traverses, climbing walls, nets, platforms,
24 ropes, swings, towers and ziplines, which may be installed on or in

1 trees, poles, portable structures or buildings, or be part of self-
2 supporting structures.

3 (3) "Participant" means any person who engages in activities
4 on a zipline or canopy tour individually or in a group activity
5 supervised by a zipline or canopy tour operator.

6 (4) "Zipline" means a cable or rope line suspended between
7 support structures enabling a participant attached to a pulley to
8 traverse from one point to another.

9 (5) "Zipline operator" means any person, partnership,
10 corporation or other commercial entity and their agents, officers,
11 employees or representatives, who has operational responsibility
12 for any zipline or canopy tour.

13 **§20-3C-3. Duties of zipline operators.**

14 Every zipline operator shall:

15 (1) Construct, install, maintain and operate all ziplines and
16 canopy tours in accordance with ACCT or substantially equivalent
17 standards.

18 (2) Ensure that ziplines and canopy tours are inspected
19 annually by a professional inspector who meets the qualifications
20 set forth in ACCT or substantially equivalent standards.

21 (3) Procure and maintain commercial general liability
22 insurance against claims for personal injury, death and property
23 damages occurring upon, in or about the zipline or canopy tour
24 which affords protection to the limit of not less than \$1 million

1 for injury or death of a single person, to the limit of \$1 million
2 for any one accident or occurrence, and to the limit of not less
3 than \$100,000 for property damage; and

4 (4) Maintain records for a period of at least three years from
5 the date of the creation of the record of:

6 (A) Proof of insurance;

7 (B) Inspection reports;

8 (C) Maintenance records; and

9 (D) Participant acknowledgment, assumption of risks and
10 release of liability.

11 **§20-3C-4. Responsibilities of participants; assumption of risks;**
12 **prohibited acts.**

13 (a) Each participant has the sole individual responsibility
14 for knowing the range of his or her own ability to negotiate a
15 zipline or canopy tour, and it is the duty of each participant to
16 participate as instructed by the zipline operator to participate
17 within the limits of his or her own ability.

18 (b) Each participant expressly assumes the risk of and legal
19 responsibility for any injury, loss or damage to persons or
20 property which results from participation in the sport of ziplining
21 or canopy touring, including, but not limited to, any injury, loss
22 or damage caused by variation in terrain, weather conditions,
23 rocks, trees or other forms of forest growth or debris: *Provided,*
24 That the injury, loss or damage is not caused by the willful and

1 wanton misconduct of the zipline operator or an agent or employee
2 of the zipline operator.

3 (c) No participant may:

4 (1) Use a zipline or canopy tour without the authority,
5 supervision and guidance of the zipline operator;

6 (2) Drop, throw or expel any object from a zipline or canopy
7 tour except as authorized by the operator;

8 (3) Perform any act which interferes with the running or
9 operation of a zipline or canopy tour; or

10 (4) Engage in any harmful conduct, or willfully or negligently
11 engage in any type of conduct which contributes to cause injury to
12 any person.

13 **§20-3C-5. Liability of zipline operators.**

14 (a) A zipline operator is liable for injury, loss or damage
15 caused by failure to follow the duties set forth in subsection (a),
16 section three of this article where the violation of duty is
17 causally related to the injury, loss or damage suffered.

18 (b) A zipline operator is not liable for any injury, loss or
19 damage caused by the negligence of any person who is not an agent
20 or employee of the zipline operator.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill to regulate zipline and canopy
tour operations. The bill sets forth duties of zipline operators,
requires liability insurance and sets forth record keeping
requirements. The bill further provides for responsibilities for
participants, provides for assumption of risks, and sets forth
prohibited acts.

This article is new; therefore, strike-throughs and underscoring have been omitted.