

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2019 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **Senate Bill 333**

BY SENATORS MAYNARD, BOSO, SYPOLT, AND TARR

[Introduced January 16, 2019; Referred  
to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; and  
then to the Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §11-3-9 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating  
2 to exempting from personal property taxation private passenger automobiles that are 25  
3 years old or older.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 3. ASSESSMENTS GENERALLY.**

**§11-3-9. Property exempt from taxation.**

1 (a) All property, real and personal, described in this subsection, and to the extent limited  
2 by this section, is exempt from taxation:

3 (1) Property belonging to the United States, other than property permitted by the United  
4 States to be taxed under state law;

5 (2) Property belonging exclusively to the state;

6 (3) Property belonging exclusively to any county, district, city, village, or town in this state  
7 and used for public purposes;

8 (4) Property located in this state belonging to any city, town, village, county, or any other  
9 political subdivision of another state and used for public purposes;

10 (5) Property used exclusively for divine worship;

11 (6) Parsonages and the household goods and furniture pertaining thereto;

12 (7) Mortgages, bonds, and other evidence of indebtedness in the hands of bona fide  
13 owners and holders hereafter issued and sold by churches and religious societies for the  
14 purposes of securing money to be used in the erection of church buildings used exclusively for  
15 divine worship or for the purpose of paying indebtedness thereon;

16 (8) Cemeteries;

17 (9) Property belonging to, or held in trust for, colleges, seminaries, academies, and free  
18 schools, if used for educational, literary, or scientific purposes, including books, apparatus,  
19 annuities, and furniture;

20 (10) Property belonging to, or held in trust for, colleges or universities located in West

21 Virginia, or any public or private nonprofit foundation or corporation which receives contributions  
22 exclusively for such college or university, if the property or dividends, interest, rents, or royalties  
23 derived therefrom are used or devoted to educational purposes of such college or university;

24 (11) Public and family libraries;

25 (12) Property used for charitable purposes and not held or leased out for profit;

26 (13) Property used for the public purposes of distributing electricity, water, or natural gas  
27 or providing sewer service by a duly chartered nonprofit corporation when such property is not  
28 held, leased out, or used for profit;

29 (14) Property used for area economic development purposes by nonprofit corporations  
30 when the property is not leased out for profit;

31 (15) All real estate not exceeding one acre in extent, and the buildings on the real estate,  
32 used exclusively by any college or university society as a literary hall, or as a dormitory or  
33 clubroom, if not used with a view to profit, including, but not limited to, property owned by a  
34 fraternity or sorority organization affiliated with a university or college or property owned by a  
35 nonprofit housing corporation or similar entity on behalf of a fraternity or sorority organization  
36 affiliated with a university or college, when the property is used as residential accommodations or  
37 as a dormitory for members of the organization;

38 (16) All property belonging to benevolent associations not conducted for private profit;

39 (17) Property belonging to any public institution for the education of the deaf, intellectually  
40 disabled, or blind or any hospital not held or leased out for profit;

41 (18) Houses of refuge and mental health facility or orphanage;

42 (19) Homes for children or for the aged, friendless, or infirm not conducted for private  
43 profit;

44 (20) Fire engines and implements for extinguishing fires, and property used exclusively  
45 for the safekeeping thereof, and for the meeting of fire companies;

46 (21) All property on hand to be used in the subsistence of livestock on hand at the

47 commencement of the assessment year;

48 (22) Household goods to the value of \$200, whether or not held or used for profit;

49 (23) Bank deposits and money;

50 (24) Household goods, which for purposes of this section means only personal property  
51 and household goods commonly found within the house and items used to care for the house and  
52 its surrounding property, when not held or used for profit;

53 (25) Personal effects, which for purposes of this section means only articles and items of  
54 personal property commonly worn on or about the human body or carried by a person and  
55 normally thought to be associated with the person when not held or used for profit;

56 (26) Dead victuals laid away for family use;

57 (27) All property belonging to the state, any county, district, city, village, town, or other  
58 political subdivision or any state college or university which is subject to a lease purchase  
59 agreement and which provides that, during the term of the lease purchase agreement, title to the  
60 leased property rests in the lessee so long as lessee is not in default or shall not have terminated  
61 the lease as to the property;

62 (28) Personal property, including vehicles that qualify for a farm use exemption certificate  
63 pursuant to §17A-3-2 of this code and livestock, employed exclusively in agriculture, as defined  
64 in article X, section one of the West Virginia Constitution: *Provided*, That this exemption only  
65 applies in the case of ~~such~~ the personal property used on a farm or farming operation that annually  
66 produces for sale agricultural products, as defined in rules of the Tax Commissioner;

67 (29) Private passenger automobiles that are 25 years old or older;

68 ~~(29)~~ (30) Real property owned by a nonprofit organization whose primary purpose is youth  
69 development by means of adventure, educational, or recreational activities for young people,  
70 which real property contains a facility built with the expenditure of not less than \$100 million that  
71 is capable of supporting additional activities within the region or the state and which is leased or  
72 used to generate revenue for the nonprofit organization whether or not the property is used by

73 the nonprofit organization for its nonprofit purpose, subject to the requirements, limitations and  
74 conditions set forth in §11-3-9(h) of this code; and

75 ~~(30)~~ (31) Any other property or security exempted by any other provision of law.

76 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of §11-3-9(a) of this code, no property is exempt from  
77 taxation which has been purchased or procured for the purpose of evading taxation whether  
78 temporarily holding the ~~same~~ property over the first day of the assessment year or otherwise.

79 (c) Real property which is exempt from taxation by §11-3-9(a) of this code shall be entered  
80 upon the assessor's books, together with the true and actual value thereof, but no taxes may be  
81 levied upon the property or extended upon the assessor's books.

82 (d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, this section does not exempt from  
83 taxation any property owned by, or held in trust for, educational, literary, scientific, religious, or  
84 other charitable corporations or organizations, including any public or private nonprofit foundation  
85 or corporation existing for the support of any college or university located in West Virginia, unless  
86 such property, or the dividends, interest, rents, or royalties derived therefrom, is used primarily  
87 and immediately for the purposes of the corporations or organizations.

88 (e) The Tax Commissioner shall, by issuance of rules, provide each assessor with  
89 guidelines to ensure uniform assessment practices statewide to effect the intent of this section.

90 (f) Inasmuch as there is litigation pending regarding application of this section to property  
91 held by fraternities and sororities, amendments to this section enacted in the year 1998 shall apply  
92 to all cases and controversies pending on the date of such enactment.

93 (g) The amendment to subdivision (27), subsection (a) of this section, passed during the  
94 2005 regular session of the Legislature, shall apply to all applicable lease purchase agreements  
95 in existence upon the effective date of the amendment.

96 (h) Nonprofit youth organization exemption — limitations, conditions, collection, and  
97 administration of one and one quarter percent fee, limitations, and distribution of monies.

98 (1) The exemption from ad valorem taxation provided pursuant to the provisions of

99 subdivision (29), subsection (a) of this section does not apply to a property owned by a nonprofit  
100 organization otherwise qualifying for the exemption but which property or facilities are used for-  
101 profit or outside the primary purpose of the owner which result in unrelated business taxable  
102 income as defined by Section 512 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, unless  
103 the income is generated by an activity upon which the one and one quarter percent fee authorized  
104 by subdivision (2) of this section is applied as provided in subdivision (3) of this subsection.

105 (2) The owner of real property exempt from ad valorem taxation under subdivision (29),  
106 subsection (a) of this section shall pay an amount equal to one and one quarter percent of the  
107 gross revenues the owner receives in accordance with this subsection. For purposes of this  
108 subsection, "gross revenues" means the gross amount received by the owner as payment for use  
109 of the property or the facilities thereon.

110 (3) Gross revenues derived from the following facilities, uses, activities, and operations  
111 are subject to a fee of one and one quarter percent of such gross revenues:

112 (A) Gross revenues derived from the use of lodging and campground facilities by persons  
113 participating in meetings and multiday spectator sports or multiday recreational, celebratory, or  
114 ceremonial events held on-site where on-site lodging or camping is offered as part of the program.  
115 For purposes of this section the term "meeting" means, and is limited to, a gathering, assembly,  
116 or conference of two or more persons who have deliberately convened at a single specific location  
117 at a single specified time and date for a common specific purpose.

118 (B) Gross revenues derived from any retail store located at the facility that is open only to  
119 those persons who are attending meetings, spectator sports, recreational, celebratory, or  
120 ceremonial events held on-site at the facility.

121 (C) Gross revenues derived from operations of gift shops at a welcome or information  
122 center located adjacent to a public highway operated by the nonprofit organization which is open  
123 to the general public.

124 (D) Gross revenues derived from the leasing of zip-lines, canopy tours, wheeled sports,

125 and climbing facilities used by the general public on a for-profit basis: (i) Under a written  
126 agreement with a licensed commercial outfitter operating a business utilizing zip-lines, canopy  
127 tours, wheeled sports, or climbing areas of a similar nature in the same or an adjacent county  
128 where the facilities are located; and (ii) when the property or facilities are used as part of a training  
129 or advanced experience offered by the licensed commercial outfitter.

130 (E) Gross revenues derived from the use or operation of zip-lines, canopy tours, wheeled  
131 sports facilities or activities, climbing facilities or activities and the use or operation of other  
132 sporting facilities on the exempt property that are leased on a for-profit basis for spectator events,  
133 such as concerts, spectator sporting events or exhibitions or similar mass gathering events.

134 (F) Gross revenues derived from leases or agreements for use of the property for meetings  
135 and multiday spectator sports or events or multiday recreational, celebratory, or ceremonial  
136 events held on site.

137 (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section to the contrary, programs or  
138 activities occurring on the property or its facilities held in conjunction with a government  
139 organization or sponsored by other nonprofit organizations serving youth, veterans, military  
140 services, public service agencies including, fire, police, emergency and search and rescue  
141 services, government agencies, schools and universities, health care providers and similar  
142 organizations or groups which are designed to provide opportunities for learning or training in the  
143 areas of leadership, character education, science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics  
144 (STEAM) programs, physical challenges, sustainability, conservation and outdoor learning shall  
145 be considered a charitable or nonprofit use for the purposes of this section and not subject to the  
146 one and one quarter percent fee.

147 (5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section to the contrary, activities open to  
148 the public through individual visitor passes allowing tours and access to the property and its  
149 facilities for the purpose of viewing or participating in demonstrations, programs and facilities  
150 providing information and experiences consistent with the owner's nonprofit purposes where zip-

151 lines, canopy tours, wheeled sports, or climbing facilities are merely components of the  
152 demonstrations, programs and facilities used shall be considered a charitable or nonprofit use for  
153 the purposes of this section and not subject to the 1.25 percent fee: *Provided*, That such individual  
154 visitor passes may not include the rental or use of on-site overnight lodging or camping facilities.

155 (6) *Administration.* —

156 (A) The sheriff of the county wherein the majority of the acreage of the property is located  
157 as specified in the deed to such property, shall collect, on a monthly basis, all moneys derived  
158 from the fee of 1.25 percent of the gross revenues imposed under this subsection.

159 (B) The sheriff of the county wherein the majority of the acreage of the property is located  
160 as specified in the deed to such property, shall prescribe such forms and schedules as may be  
161 necessary for the efficient, accurate, and expeditious payment and reporting of the 1.25 percent  
162 fee specified in this subsection on gross revenues.

163 (C) The sheriff of the county wherein the majority of the acreage of the property is located  
164 as specified in the deed to such property shall administer the fee imposed under this subsection,  
165 including refunds and adjustments.

166 (D) Payment, administration, and compliance of fee payers and administrators shall be  
167 subject to audit by the Office of Chief Inspector.

168 (E) All moneys so collected, net of refunds and adjustments, shall be paid into a special  
169 account in the State Treasury, which is hereby created, and the amount thereof shall be  
170 distributed and paid annually, by the State Treasurer, on October 1 of each year, into the funds  
171 and to the distributees specified in subdivision (7) of this subsection in the amounts specified  
172 therein.

173 (7) *Distribution.* —

174 (A) Twenty-five percent of moneys so collected, net of refunds and adjustments, shall be  
175 paid annually to the Tourism Promotion Fund established pursuant to §5B-2-12 of this code.

176 (B) Twenty-five percent of moneys so collected, net of refunds and adjustments, shall be



177 paid annually to the sheriff of the county where the property is located which, but for the exemption  
178 provided in subdivision (29), subsection (a) of this section, would be entitled to receive ad valorem  
179 taxes on the property. The sheriff shall treat all such payments in the same manner as payments  
180 in lieu of taxes, and such payments are subject to the adjustment mandated under §18-9A-12 of  
181 this code. For properties located in more than one county, the amount paid to the sheriff of the  
182 county shall be in proportion to the total number of acres located in each county at the close of  
183 the fiscal year, as specified in the deed to such property.

184 (C) Fifty percent of monies so collected, net of refunds and adjustments, shall be divided  
185 equally and paid annually into separate accounts established and maintained by the sheriffs of  
186 the county or counties wherein the property is located and the sheriffs of any other county that is  
187 within the jurisdiction of the same economic development authority as the county or counties  
188 wherein the property is located to be used solely for the establishment and delivery of a science,  
189 technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) program in conjunction with the owner of the  
190 exempt property. The funds shall be divided equally for use in each county and the programs  
191 must be approved by the respective county superintendents of schools. Expenditures from the  
192 accounts shall be authorized by the county superintendent of schools.

193 (8) If lodging is furnished as part of a retreat, meeting, or multiday spectator sport or event  
194 being held on-site wherein on-site lodging or camping is offered as part of the program, any  
195 applicable hotel occupancy tax and state and local consumers sales and service tax and use tax  
196 shall be paid based upon the actual location of such lodging.

197 (9) If merchants are allowed to do business on the property, the owner or lessee of the  
198 property shall offer space to local merchants on terms at least as favorable as are offered to other  
199 merchants.

200 (10) For the purposes of this subsection, owner includes the owner holding record title to  
201 the property and its affiliates to the extent they are commonly owned, controlled or have the power  
202 to appoint the governing body of the affiliate.

203           (11) The Tourism Commission shall include in its annual report submitted to the Governor  
204 and the Legislature a summary of funds paid into the Tourism Promotion Fund and  
205 recommendations pertaining to the administration of this section.

206           (12) This subsection may not be construed to prohibit the owner of property otherwise  
207 subject to this section from having portions of the property severed from the remainder of the  
208 property, assessed and taxed as if nonexempt and thereafter conducting business on such  
209 property the same as any other nonexempt property: *Provided*, That the area of property to be  
210 severed shall be approved by the county commission wherein the property lies so as to include  
211 in the severance all property substantially supporting the for profit or business activity giving rise  
212 to the specific purpose of the severance and excluding all property entitled to the continued  
213 benefits of this act.

214           (i) To assure the implementation of subsection (h) of this section does not harm local and  
215 regionally located businesses by use of the tax exempt facility in a manner that cause unfair  
216 competition and unreasonable loss of revenue to those businesses, studies shall be periodically  
217 conducted to assure that further legislation is in order regarding the uses of the tax exempt facility.  
218 The county commission of any county where such a property is located shall report to the Joint  
219 Committee on Government and Finance by January 1 every five years after the effective date of  
220 this section. The report shall include information on any unfair business competition resulting from  
221 the establishment of the nonprofit status, and include a report of the costs and benefits to its  
222 county of the tax exemption and associated fee, including an audit of that county's use of the net  
223 revenues. The West Virginia University Bureau of Business and Economic Research in  
224 coordination of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Marshall University, by  
225 January 1, 2020, shall undertake a study and report to the committee, the economic impact of  
226 this tax exemption and fee to the county and that region of the state, and make any  
227 recommendations regarding the benefits and disadvantages for continuing the provision of this  
228 tax exemption and fee, included, but not limited to, the impacts to other small and large

229 businesses in the county, the costs to the county has incurred as a result of use of the facility,  
230 and any other relevant data that the universities may ~~deem~~ determine relevant.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to exempt from personal property taxation private passenger automobiles that are 25 years old or older.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.