

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 641

BY SENATORS PHILLIPS, STOLLINGS, LINDSAY, SMITH,

HAMILTON, AND UNGER

[Introduced March 15, 2021; referred
to the Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §11-13A-6a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended,
2 relating to coal severance tax, providing for the use of severance funds for litter programs.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 13A. SEVERANCE AND BUSINESS PRIVILEGE TAX ACT.

§11-13A-6a. Reallocation and dedication of percentage of severance tax for benefit of coal-producing counties; phase-in period; permissible uses of distributed revenues; duties of State Treasurer and State Tax Commissioner; audits; rulemaking.

1 (a) The purpose of this section is to provide for the reallocation and dedication of a portion
2 of the tax attributable to the severance of coal imposed by section three of this article for the use
3 and benefit of the various counties of this state in which the coal upon which that tax is imposed
4 was located at the time it was severed from the ground. Those counties are referred to in this
5 section as the coal-producing counties or, in the singular, as a coal-producing county.

6 (b)(1) Effective July 1, 2012, one percent of the tax attributable to the severance of coal
7 imposed by section three of this article is dedicated and shall be distributed for the use and benefit
8 of the coal-producing counties as provided in this section. Effective July 1, 2013, two percent of
9 the tax attributable to the severance of coal imposed by section three of this article is dedicated
10 and shall be distributed for the use and benefit of the coal-producing counties as provided in this
11 section. Effective July 1, 2014, three percent of the tax attributable to the severance of coal
12 imposed by section three of this article is dedicated and shall be distributed for the use and benefit
13 of the coal-producing counties as provided in this section. Effective July 1, 2015, four percent of
14 the tax attributable to the severance of coal imposed by section three of this article is dedicated
15 and shall be distributed for the use and benefit of the coal-producing counties as provided in this
16 section. Effective July 1, 2016, and thereafter, five percent of the tax attributable to the severance
17 of coal imposed by section three of this article is dedicated and shall be distributed for the use
18 and benefit of the coal-producing counties as provided in this section. Effective July 1, 2019, and
19 thereafter, the portion of the severance tax on coal imposed by §11-13A-3 of this code dedicated

20 and to be distributed for the use and benefit of the coal-producing counties as provided in this
21 subsection shall not be less than the amount distributed pursuant to this subsection for the fiscal
22 year beginning July 1, 2018.

23 (2) In no fiscal year may the proceeds dedicated in subdivision (1) of this subsection
24 exceed the sum of \$20 million.

25 (3) For purposes of this subsection, the tax attributable to the severance of coal imposed
26 by §11-13A-3 of this code does not include the thirty-five one hundredths of one percent additional
27 severance tax on coal imposed by the state for the benefit of counties and municipalities as
28 provided in §11-13A-6 of this code.

29 (c) The amounts of the tax dedicated in subsection (b) of this section shall be deposited,
30 from time to time, into a special fund known as the Coal County Reallocated Severance Tax Fund,
31 which is hereby established in the State Treasury, as the proceeds are received by the State Tax
32 Commissioner.

33 (d) The net proceeds of the deposits made into the Coal County Reallocated Severance
34 Tax Fund shall be allocated among and distributed quarterly to the coal-producing counties by
35 the State Treasurer in the manner specified in this section. On or before each distribution date,
36 the State Treasurer shall determine the total amount of moneys that will be available for
37 distribution to the respective counties entitled to the moneys on that distribution date. The amount
38 to which a coal-producing county is entitled from the Coal County Reallocated Severance Tax
39 Fund shall be determined in accordance with subsection (e) of this section. After determining as
40 set forth in subsection (e) of this section the amount each coal-producing county is entitled to
41 receive from the fund, a warrant of the State Auditor for the sum due to each coal-producing
42 county shall be issued and a check drawn thereon making payment of that amount shall thereafter
43 be distributed to each such coal-producing county by hand, mail commercial delivery or electronic
44 transmission.

45 (e) The amount to which a coal-producing county is entitled from the Coal County

46 Reallocated Severance Tax Fund shall be determined by:

47 (1) Dividing the total amount of moneys in the fund then available for distribution by the
48 total number of tons of coal mined in this state during the preceding quarter; and

49 (2) Multiplying the quotient thus obtained by the number of tons of coal removed from the
50 ground in the county during the preceding quarter.

51 (f) (1) No distribution made to a county under this section may be deposited into the
52 county's general revenue fund. The county commission of each county receiving a distribution
53 under this section shall establish a special account to be known as the "(Name of County) Coal
54 County Reallocated Severance Tax Fund" into which all distributions made to that county under
55 this section shall be deposited.

56 (2) Moneys in the county's Coal County Reallocated Severance Tax Fund shall be
57 expended by the county commission solely for economic development projects and infrastructure
58 projects.

59 (3) For purposes of this section:

60 (A) "Economic development project" means a project in the state which is likely to foster
61 economic growth and development in the area in which the project is developed for commercial,
62 industrial, community improvement or preservation or other proper purposes.

63 (B) "Infrastructure project" means a project in the state which is likely to foster
64 infrastructure improvements including, but not limited to, post-mining land use, any water or
65 wastewater facilities or any part thereof, storm water systems, steam, gas, telephone and
66 telecommunications, broadband development, electric lines and installations, roads, bridges,
67 railroad spurs, drainage and flood control facilities, industrial park development or buildings that
68 promote job creation and retention, or litter clean up programs.

69 (4) A county commission may not expend any of the funds available in its Coal County
70 Reallocated Severance Tax Fund for personal services, for the costs of issuing bonds, or for the
71 payment of bond debt service, and shall direct the total funds available in its coal county

72 reallocated severance tax fund to project development, which may include the costs of
73 architectural and engineering plans, site assessments, site remediation, specifications and
74 surveys, and any other expenses necessary or incidental to determining the feasibility or
75 practicability of any economic development project or infrastructure project.

76 (5) On or before December 31, 2013, and December 1 of each year thereafter, the county
77 commission of each county receiving a distribution of funds under this section shall deliver to the
78 Joint Committee on Government and Finance a written report setting forth the specific projects
79 for which those funds were expended during the next preceding fiscal year, a detailed account of
80 those expenditures, and a showing that the expenditures were made for the purposes required
81 by this section.

82 (g) An audit of any funds distributed under this section may be authorized at any time by
83 the Joint Committee on Government and Finance to be conducted by the Legislative Auditor at
84 no cost to the county commission or county commissions audited.

85 (h) The State Tax Commissioner shall propose for promulgation legislative rules pursuant
86 to article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code for the administration of the provisions of this
87 section, and is authorized to promulgate emergency rules for those purposes pursuant to that
88 article.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to allow counties to use severance tax proceeds for litter
clean up.

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