

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Originating

House Bill 5696

By Delegate Howell

[Originating in the Committee on Economic
Development and Tourism; Reported on February 20,
2024]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §20-17B-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
2 to lead member county of the Upper Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Authority.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

CHAPTER 20. NATURAL RESOURCES.

ARTICLE 17B. UPPER OHIO VALLEY TRAIL NETWORK RECREATION AUTHORITY.

§20-17B-2. Creation of Upper Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Authority and establishment of recreation area.

1 (a) There is hereby created the Upper Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Authority
2 consisting of representatives from all counties in the northern panhandle – Hancock, Brooke,
3 Ohio, and Marshall – and Ohio River valley counties to include Wetzel, Tyler, Pleasants, Wood,
4 Jackson, Mason, and Cabell, organized pursuant to the provisions of §20-17-1 *et seq.* of this code.
5 This authority is authorized to establish an Upper Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Area within
6 the jurisdictions of those counties and the authority shall be subject to the powers, duties,
7 immunities, and restrictions provided in §20-17-1 *et seq.* of this code. Visitors and participants in
8 recreational activities within the trail network shall, in similar respects, be subject to the user
9 requirements and prohibitions of §20-17-7 of this code.

10 (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, an adjacent county may join the Upper
11 Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Authority pursuant to the procedures set forth in §20-17-3(b)
12 of this code.

13 (c) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the Upper Ohio Valley Trail Network
14 Recreation Authority may merge with another multicounty trail network authority, pursuant to the
15 procedures set forth in §20-17-3(c) of this code.

16 (d) Notwithstanding §20-17A-4 of this code, Wood County ~~Monongalia County~~ of the
17 ~~Mountaineer Trail Network Recreation~~ authority shall serve as the lead an ex-officio member of the
18 Upper Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Authority for the purposes of establishing the Upper

19 Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Authority trail network and coordinating ~~the two trail~~
20 ~~networks~~ with the Mountaineer Trail Network Recreation Authority. Upon completion of
21 establishment of linkages with the Mountaineer Trail Network Recreation Authority, the Upper
22 Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Authority shall administer and manage its own trail system.

23 (e) The Upper Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Authority may set goals of connecting
24 to the Mountaineer Trail Network and any other trails in adjacent neighboring states that can be
25 feasibly connected.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to assign Wood County as the lead member county of the Upper Ohio Valley Trail Network Recreation Authority.

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