

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 141

By Senator Woodrum

[Introduced February 12, 2025; referred
to the Committee on Natural Resources]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §20-7-1b of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to
 2 clarifying that the Director of the Division of Natural Resources has replaced the
 3 designation of the "Department of Natural Resources" to enter into written agreements
 4 with federal agencies in the state with law-enforcement duties on and in federal lands
 5 located within the boundaries of West Virginia to enforce state laws therein.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 7. LAW ENFORCEMENT, MOTORBOATING, LITTER.

§20-7-1b. Designation of certain federal law-enforcement officers as special natural resources police officers.

1 (a) The Legislature finds that it is in the mutual interest of the department and certain land
 2 management agencies of the United States to cooperate in the enforcement of state statutes and
 3 regulations within and adjacent to units of the National Park System, National Forests and U.S.
 4 Army Corps of Engineers projects located within the State of West Virginia.

5 (b) Accordingly, ~~the~~ The director of the ~~department of natural resources may~~ Division of
 6 Natural Resources shall enter into a written agreement with a federal agency providing for the
 7 appointment of employees of the federal agency as special natural resources police officers and
 8 setting forth the terms and conditions within which the federal employees may exercise the powers
 9 and duties of special natural resources police officers. The terms and conditions in the agreement
 10 shall grant a special natural resources police officer appointed pursuant to the agreement the
 11 same powers and duties as prescribed for a full-time salaried natural resources police officer of the
 12 department, but shall limit a special natural resources police officer in the exercise of his or her
 13 powers and duties to areas within the boundaries of the federal units to which the officer is
 14 assigned in his or her federal employment and to situations outside the boundaries of the federal
 15 units where the exercise is for the mutual aid of natural resources police officers as set forth in the
 16 agreement.

17 Any federal employee whose duties involve the enforcement of the criminal laws of the

18 United States and who possesses a valid law-enforcement certification issued by a federal land
19 management agency which certifies the meeting of requirements at least equivalent to the law-
20 enforcement officer training requirements promulgated pursuant to §29A-30-1 *et seq.* of this code,
21 may be certified under the provisions of ~~said article twenty-nine~~ §29A-30-1 *et seq.* and appointed
22 as a special natural resources police officer under the provisions of this section. Any special
23 natural resources police officer so appointed may not receive compensation or benefits from the
24 state or any political subdivisions thereof for the performance of his or her duties as a special
25 natural resources police officer.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to clarify that the Director of the Division of Natural Resources has replaced the designation of the "Department of Natural Resources" to enter into written agreements with federal agencies in the state with law enforcement duties on and in federal lands located within the boundaries of West Virginia to enforce state laws therein required.

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