

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

**2025 REGULAR SESSION**

**Committee Substitute**

**for**

**Senate Bill 869**

BY SENATOR HAMILTON

[Reported March 27, 2025, from the Committee on  
Economic Development]



1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding four new sections,  
2 designated §17-28-13, §17-28-14, §17-28-15, and §17-28-16, relating to the Robert C.  
3 Byrd Corridor H Highway Authority; providing for legislative findings; continuing authority  
4 and providing for composition of authority members; providing for ex officio, nonvoting  
5 members and voting members; providing for terms of membership; providing for meeting  
6 and quorum requirements; providing that members are not compensated; reimbursing  
7 members for expenses; providing for certain powers and duties; and requiring annual  
8 reporting to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.

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

**ARTICLE 28. WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT TRANSPORTATION  
ACT.**

**§17-28-13. Robert C. Byrd Corridor H Highway Authority Legislative Findings.**

1 The Legislature finds that the economic corridor, known as the Robert C. Byrd Corridor H  
2 Highway Authority (Corridor H Authority), which runs through the counties of Lewis, Upshur,  
3 Barbour, Randolph, Tucker, Grant, and Hardy, has undergone significant challenges owing to  
4 widespread changes in the national and global economies. Therefore, every effort should be  
5 made to assist the transformation of the regional economies along Corridor H by providing  
6 guidance to local governments, businesses, and industries which may maximize economic  
7 development. This will not only foster greater transportation efficiencies, but it will also provide  
8 vital connectivity to burgeoning markets, resulting in both job creation and economic expansion  
9 in northeastern West Virginia.

10 The economic development agencies along this corridor are aligning efforts to embrace  
11 the expansion of economic development policies adopted by the West Virginia Legislature as a  
12 tool for economic development and are focused on efforts to transform and revitalize the region

by fostering partnerships and initiatives which are complementary and supportive of existing successful industries in West Virginia.

The Legislature intends to facilitate implementation of critical and time-sensitive opportunities for economic development along the Corridor H Authority Corridor and to facilitate assistance to local economic development authorities in the Corridor H region.

**§17-28-14. Corridor H Authority; membership; terms; meetings; quorum; compensation.**

(a) The Corridor H Authority previously created is hereby continued and shall consist of 21 voting members and five ex officio, nonvoting members. All members shall be appointed before July 1, 2025.

(b) The five ex officio, nonvoting members are the Commissioner of Highways or designee, the Director of Natural Resources or designee, the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development or designee, the Executive Director of the Region 7 Planning and Development Council, and the Executive Director of the Region 8 Planning and Development Council. All terms of ex officio, nonvoting members are for three years.

(c) Each of the county commissions of the counties of Randolph, Tucker, Grant, Hardy, Barbour, Upshur, and Lewis shall appoint three voting members to the Corridor H Authority. The terms of the voting members initially appointed by a county commission are as follows: One member shall be appointed for a term of one year, one member shall be appointed for a term of two years, and one member shall be appointed for a term of three years. All successive appointments shall be for a term of three years. Any voting member may be removed for cause by the appointing county commission. Should a vacancy occur, the person appointed to fill the vacancy shall serve only for the unexpired portion thereof. All members are eligible for reappointment and will serve until a successor is appointed.

(d) There shall be an annual meeting of the Corridor H Authority on the third Monday in July in each year. Regular meetings shall be established by the authority. A special meeting may be called by the president, the secretary, or any two members of the authority and may be held

only after all members are given notice of the meeting in writing. Eleven voting members constitute a quorum for all meetings. At each annual meeting, the authority shall elect a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The authority shall adopt bylaws and rules as may be necessary for its operation and management.

(e) A majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for conducting business.

(f) Ex officio members are not entitled to compensation for their services, but shall receive reimbursement from their respective agencies for expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties for the authority.

(g) Voting members are not entitled to compensation for their services, but shall receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties for the authority.

**§17-28-15. Powers and duties.**

(a) The Corridor H Authority may exercise all powers and duties necessary or appropriate to carry out its purposes including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Set specific tactical goals and demonstrable objectives via input from member counties and communities;

(2) Maintain an inclusive, rather than constraining, geographic focus on economic development;

(3) Seek out private-public partnerships to achieve its vision;

(4) Foster partnerships with groups in other states to help build broad support for the economic development and infrastructure projects undertaken in the geographic region of the Corridor H Authority;

(5) Seek governmental engagement for guidance on local, state, regional, or national initiatives to achieve economic development objectives;

(6) Develop economic and tourism asset portfolios for inclusion of the authority's vision;

(7) Acquire, own, hold, and dispose of property, real and personal, tangible and intangible;

15       (8) Lease property, whether as lessee or lessor, and to acquire or grant through easement,  
16 license, or other appropriate legal form, the right to develop and use property and open it to the  
17 use of the public;

18       (9) Mortgage or otherwise grant security interests on its property;

19       (10) Procure insurance against any losses in connection with its property, license, or  
20 easements, contracts, including hold-harmless agreements, operations, or assets in such  
21 amounts and from such insurers as the authority considers desirable;

22       (11) Maintain such sinking funds and reserves as the authority determines appropriate for  
23 the purposes of meeting future monetary obligations and needs of the authority;

24       (12) Contract for the provision of legal services by private counsel and, notwithstanding  
25 any other provision of the code to the contrary, the counsel may, in addition to the provisions of  
26 other legal services, represent the authority in court, negotiate contracts and other agreements  
27 on behalf of the authority, render advice to the authority on any matter relating to the authority,  
28 prepare contracts and other agreements, and provide such other legal services as may be  
29 requested by the authority;

30       (13) Appoint officers, agents, and employees, and to contract for and engage the services  
31 of consultants;

32       (14) Make contracts of every kind and nature, and to execute all instruments necessary  
33 or convenient for carrying on its business, including contracts with any other governmental agency  
34 of this state or of the federal government, or with any person, individual, partnership, or  
35 corporation to effect any or all of the purposes of this article;

36       (15) Without, in any way, limiting any other provision of this section, accept grants and  
37 loans from, and enter into contracts and other transactions with, any federal agency; and

38       (16) Accept gifts or grants of property, funds, security interests, money, materials, labor,  
39 supplies, or services from the federal government or from any governmental unit or any person,  
40 firm, or corporation and to carry out the terms or provisions of, or make agreements with respect

41 to, or pledge any gifts or grants and to do any and all things necessary, useful, desirable, or  
42 convenient in connection with the procuring, acceptance, or disposition of gifts or grants.

43 (b) No liability or obligation is incurred by the authority beyond the extent to which money  
44 is awarded for grant acquisition facilitation.

**§17-28-16. Report to the Legislature.**

1 On or before December 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the Corridor H Authority shall  
2 prepare and submit to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance a written report, which  
3 may be transmitted electronically, detailing its undertakings for the past year, including, but not  
4 limited to, all projects and any private-public partnerships entered into, as well as any  
5 recommended legislation or policy actions needed to facilitate greater economic development  
6 along the corridor.