

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

**2026 REGULAR SESSION**

**ENGROSSED**

## **House Bill 4801**

By Delegates Pritt, Hornby, and Flanigan

[Introduced January 26, 2026; referred to the  
Committee on the Judiciary]



1 A BILL to amend and reenact §7-28-14 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to  
2 permissible expenditures of counties and cities of revenue from the hotel occupancy tax;  
3 adding demolition of unsafe and unsanitary structures and planning for reuse or  
4 improvement of property owned by municipalities and county commissions as permissible  
5 expenditures.

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

**ARTICLE                    18.                    HOTEL                    OCCUPANCY                    TAX.**

**§7-18-14. Proceeds of tax; application of proceeds.**

1            (a) Application of proceeds. — The net proceeds of the tax collected and remitted to the  
2 taxing authority pursuant to this article shall be deposited into the general revenue fund of such  
3 municipality or county commission and, after appropriation thereof, shall be expended only as  
4 provided in this section.

5            (b) Required expenditures. — At least 50 percent of the net revenue receivable during the  
6 fiscal year by a county or a municipality pursuant to this article shall be expended in the following  
7 manner for the promotion of conventions and tourism:

8            (1) Municipalities. — If a convention and visitor's bureau is located within the municipality,  
9 county, or region, and has complied with the requirements of §7-18-13a of this code, the governing  
10 body of such municipality shall appropriate the percentage required by this subsection to that  
11 bureau. If a convention and visitor's bureau is not located within such municipality, county or  
12 region, or a bureau located within such municipality has not complied with the requirements of §7-  
13 18-13a of this code, then the percentage appropriation required by this subsection shall be  
14 appropriated as follows:

15            (A) Any hotel located within such municipality may apply to such municipality for an  
16 appropriation to such hotel of a portion of the tax authorized by this article and collected by such  
17 hotel and remitted to such municipality for uses directly related to the promotion of tourism and  
18 travel, including advertising, salaries, travel, office expenses, publications, and similar expenses.

19 The portion of such tax allocable to such hotel shall not exceed 75 percent of that portion of such  
20 tax collected and remitted by such hotel which is required to be expended pursuant to this  
21 subsection: *Provided*, That prior to appropriating any moneys to such hotel, such municipality shall  
22 require the submission of, and give approval to, a budget setting forth the proposed uses of such  
23 moneys.

24 (B) If there is more than one convention and visitor's bureau that is in compliance with the  
25 requirements of §7-18-13a of this code located within a municipality, the city council may allocate  
26 the tax authorized by this article to one or more of such bureaus in such portion as the city council  
27 in its sole discretion determines.

28 (2) Counties. — If a convention and visitor's bureau is located within a county or region and  
29 has complied with the requirements of §7-18-13a of this code, the county commission shall  
30 appropriate the percentage required by this subsection to that convention and visitor's bureau. If a  
31 convention and visitor's bureau is not located within such county or region, or a bureau located  
32 within the county or region has not complied with the requirements of §7-18-13a of this code, then  
33 the percentage appropriation required by this subsection shall be appropriated as follows:

34 (A) Any hotel located within the county or region may apply to the county for an  
35 appropriation to the hotel of a portion of the tax authorized by this article and collected by the hotel  
36 and remitted to the county for uses directly related to the promotion of tourism and travel, including  
37 advertising, salaries, travel, office expenses, publications, and similar expenses. The portion of  
38 the tax allocable to the hotel may not exceed 75 percent of that portion of the tax collected and  
39 remitted by the hotel which is required to be expended pursuant to this subsection: *Provided*, That  
40 prior to appropriating any moneys to the hotel, the county shall require the submission of, and give  
41 approval to, a budget setting forth the proposed uses of such moneys.

42 (B) If there is more than one convention and visitor's bureau that is in compliance with the  
43 requirements of §7-18-13a of this code located within a county or region, the county commission

44 may allocate the tax authorized by this article to one or more of the bureaus in such portion as the  
45 county commission in its sole discretion determines.

46 (3) Legislative finding. — The Legislature hereby finds and declares that in order to attract  
47 new business and industry to this state and to retain existing business and industry all to provide  
48 the citizens of the state with economic security and to advance the business prosperity and  
49 economic welfare of this state, it is necessary to enhance recreational and tourism opportunities.  
50 Therefore, in order to promote recreation and tourism, the Legislature finds that public financial  
51 support should be provided for constructing, equipping, improving, and maintaining projects,  
52 agencies, and facilities which promote recreation and tourism. The Legislature also finds that the  
53 support of convention and visitor's bureaus and hotels is a public purpose for which funds may be  
54 expended. Local convention and visitor's bureaus and hotels receiving funds under this  
55 subsection may expend the funds for the payment of administrative expenses, and for the direct or  
56 indirect promotion of conventions and tourism, and for any other uses and purposes authorized by  
57 this subsection.

58 (c) Permissible expenditures. — After making the appropriation required by subsection (b)  
59 of this section, the remaining portion of the net revenues receivable during the fiscal year by the  
60 county or municipality, pursuant to this article, may be expended for one or more of the purposes  
61 set forth in this subsection, but for no other purpose. The purposes for which expenditures may be  
62 made pursuant to this subsection are as follows:

63 (1) The planning, construction, reconstruction, establishment, acquisition, improvement,  
64 renovation, extension, enlargement, equipment, maintenance, repair, and operation of publicly  
65 owned convention facilities, including, but not limited to, arenas, auditoriums, civic centers, and  
66 convention centers;

67 (2) The payment of principal or interest or both on revenue bonds issued to finance the  
68 convention facilities;

69 (3) The promotion of conventions;

70 (4) The construction, operation, or maintenance of public parks, tourist information  
71 centers, and recreation facilities, including land acquisition;

72 (5) The promotion of the arts;

73 (6) Historic sites;

74 (7) Beautification projects;

75 (8) Demolition of unsafe and unsanitary structures pursuant to §8-12-16 and §7-1-3ff of  
76 this code;

77 (9) Planning for reuse or improvement of property owned by municipalities and county  
78 commissions;

79 ~~(8)~~ (10) Passenger air service incentives and subsidies directly related to increasing  
80 passenger air service availability to tourism destinations in this state;

81 ~~(9)~~ (11) Medical care and emergency services in any county where:

82 (A) There is an urgent necessity to preserve the delivery of acute medical care and  
83 emergency services;

84 (B) There is an increase in need for acute medical care and emergency services directly  
85 related to tourism;

86 (C) Recurrent flooding in the county significantly disrupts, on a periodic basis, the delivery  
87 of acute medical care and emergency services;

88 (D) There is an inadequate economic base within the county from any source other than  
89 tourism to preserve the delivery of acute medical care and emergency services;

90 (E) There is an inadequate economic base directly related to low population in the county,  
91 specifically, a population of less than 10,000 persons according to the most recent decennial  
92 census taken under the authority of the United States;

93 (F) There is no more than one hospital within the county; and

94 (G) The county commission makes specific findings, by resolution, that all of the foregoing  
95 conditions within the county exist;

96           ~~(10)~~ (12) Support and operation of the Hatfield-McCoy Recreation Area by the participating  
97 county commissions in the Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreational Authority; or

98           ~~(14)~~ (13) Support and operation of economic development activities, including site  
99 development, facilities, and infrastructure in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.

100           (d) Definitions. — For purposes of this section, the following terms are defined:

101           (1) Convention and visitor's bureau and visitor's and convention bureau. — "Convention  
102 and visitor's bureau" and "visitor's and convention bureau" are interchangeable and either shall  
103 mean a nonstock, nonprofit corporation with a full-time staff working exclusively to promote  
104 tourism and to attract conventions, conferences, and visitors to the municipality, county, or region  
105 in which the convention and visitor's bureau or visitor's and convention bureau is located or  
106 engaged in business within.

107           (2) Convention center. — "Convention center" means a convention facility owned by the  
108 state, a county, a municipality, or other public entity or instrumentality and shall include all facilities,  
109 including armories, commercial, office, community service, and parking facilities and publicly  
110 owned facilities constructed or used for the accommodation and entertainment of tourists and  
111 visitors, constructed in conjunction with the convention center and forming reasonable  
112 appurtenances thereto.

113           (3) Fiscal year. — "Fiscal year" means the year beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of the  
114 next calendar year.

115           (4) Net proceeds. — "Net proceeds" means the gross amount of tax collections less the  
116 amount of tax lawfully refunded.

117           (5) Promotion of the arts. — "Promotion of the arts" means activity to promote public  
118 appreciation and interest in one or more of the arts. It includes the promotion of music for all types,  
119 the dramatic arts, dancing, painting, and the creative arts through shows, exhibits, festivals,  
120 concerts, musicals, and plays.

121 (6) Recreational facilities. — "Recreational facilities" means and includes any public park,  
122 parkway, playground, public recreation center, athletic field, sports arena, stadium, skating rink or  
123 arena, golf course, tennis courts, and other park and recreation facilities, whether of a like or  
124 different nature, that are owned by a county or municipality.

125 (7) Region. — "Region" means an area consisting of one or more counties or municipalities  
126 that have agreed by contract to fund a convention and visitor's bureau to promote those counties  
127 or municipalities.

128 (8) Historic site. — "Historic site" means any site listed on the United States National  
129 Register of Historic Places, or listed by a local historical landmarks commission, established under  
130 state law, when the sites are owned by a city, a county, or a nonprofit historical association and are  
131 open, from time to time, to accommodate visitors.

132 (e) Any member of a governing body who willingly and knowingly votes to or causes to be  
133 expended moneys generated by the provisions of this section for purposes other than specifically  
134 set forth in this section, or who approves of or otherwise facilitates the distribution of net proceeds  
135 to a convention and visitor's bureau failing to meet the requirements of §7-18-13a(b) of this code,  
136 is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than \$100.