

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 5405

By Delegate Dillon

[Introduced February 10, 2026; referred to the
Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,
 2 designated §31-22-1 and §31-22-2, relating to owners of 1,000 or more acres of land being
 3 designated as institutional landowners; requiring reports by the landowners to the
 4 Secretary of State; and annual reports from the Secretary of State to the Joint Standing
 5 Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

Article 22. Institutional landowners.

§31-22-1. Institutional landowners.

1 (a) All landowners who own 1,000 or more acres of land in the aggregate within West
 2 Virginia shall be designated as institutional landowners, or "ILs". For purposes of reporting within
 3 this article, all lands held or controlled by individual owners, state, local, or federal governments or
 4 non-governmental entities meeting the same acreage threshold shall be considered an
 5 institutional landowner.

6 (b) Institutional landowners does not include individuals or entities that own land
 7 designated for public or semi-public facilities that serve community needs, such as schools,
 8 hospitals, government buildings, and parks.

§31-22-2. Institutional landowners reports to Secretary of State.

1 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this code, the Secretary of State shall create a
 2 list of all institutional landowners, and contact each landowner, no less than annually, with a notice
 3 of the following filing requirements by each institutional landowner, whether an individual, state,
 4 local, or federal government or non-governmental entity to be filed with the Secretary of State:

5 (1) An inventory of parcels with a description of the types of economic activity and
 6 commerce arising from these parcels;

7 (2) The approximate market value of standing timber on these parcels;

8 (3) The number of acres, and percentage of each acre for each parcel that falls within a
 9 flood plain;

10 (4) Each five year period, a report of total acreage of these parcels with less than 15
11 degree slope;

12 (5) A report of all property and other taxes generated from ownership or activity on the
13 acreage;

14 (6) A report of all revenues arising in association with each parcel, including any private or
15 public credits or subsidies arising from carbon offset agreements, carbon sequestration
16 agreements, or contracts for public use, recreation, or wildlife management; and

17 (7) A report of all revenues per parcel for any other business activity.

18 (b) At least once annually, the Secretary of State shall report to the Joint Standing
19 Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development with a summary of data collected in the
20 previous year, relating to:

21 (1) Land use categories and trends;

22 (2) Economic patterns on the institutional landowners' lands;

23 (3) Tax implications relative to noninstitutional landowners; and

24 (4) The impact to agriculture, industry, and residential quality of life in rural communities.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to define landowners of 1,000 or more acres within West Virginia as institutional landowners; to require reports filed by the owners to the Secretary of State relating to the use of this acreage, and annually from the Secretary of State to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

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