

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 5603

By Delegates Bridges, Dean, Clark, Vance, Dillon,
and Foggin

[Introduced February 16, 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 section,
 2 designated §8-40-1, §8-40-2, §8-40-3, §8-40-4, §8-40-5, and §8-40-6, relating to out-of-
 3 state dilapidated property accountability act, establishing purpose, defining terms;
 4 requiring registration and designation of agent; requiring notice of violations; providing
 5 landowner notice of and duty to remedy violation; and establishing civil penalties.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 40. OUT-OF-STATE DILAPIDATED PROPERTY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.

§8-40-1. Purpose.

1 The Legislature finds that abandoned and dilapidated properties owned by out-of-state
 2 landowners create public safety hazards, reduce property values, and burden local governments.
 3 The purpose of this section is to ensure accountability, timely remediation, and fair cost recovery.

§8-40-2. Definitions.

1 For purposes of this section:

2 (1) "Out-of-state landowner" means any individual or entity that owns real property within
 3 West Virginia and whose primary residence or principal place of business is located outside the
 4 state.

5 (2) "Dilapidated property" means any structure, pavement or parcel that:

6 (A) Is unsafe, unfit for human habitation, or structurally unsound;

7 (B) Is in violation of local or state building, housing, or fire codes; or

8 (C) Has been vacant and unsecured for a period exceeding twelve (12) consecutive
 9 months.

10 (3) "Enforcing authority" means a municipality, county commission, or authorized code
 11 enforcement agency.

§8-40-3. Registration Requirement.

1 (a) All out-of-state landowners shall register their ownership with the enforcing authority
 2 within sixty (60) days of acquiring property.

