

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Enrolled

Senate Bill 586

BY SENATORS MARTIN AND TAYLOR

[Passed March 12, 2026; in effect 90 days from
passage (June 10, 2026)]

1 AN ACT to amend and reenact §16-1-4 and §16-1-9a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as
2 amended, relating to the regulation of public water systems; creating two classifications of
3 backflow prevention assemblies; providing that the Secretary of the Department of Health
4 may not require low-hazard backflow prevention assemblies to be inspected more
5 frequently than once in three years; and providing that high-hazard backflow prevention
6 assemblies shall be inspected annually.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. STATE PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM.

§16-1-4. Proposal of rules by the secretary.

1 (a) The secretary may propose legislative rules in accordance with the provisions of §29A-
2 3-1 *et seq.* of this code that include:

3 (1) Land usage endangering the public health: *Provided*, That no rules may be
4 promulgated or enforced restricting the subdivision or development of any parcel of land within
5 which the individual tracts, lots, or parcels exceed two acres each in total surface area and which
6 individual tracts, lots, or parcels have an average frontage of not less than 150 feet even though
7 the total surface area of the tract, lot, or parcel equals or exceeds two acres in total surface area,
8 and which tracts are sold, leased, or utilized only as single-family dwelling units. Notwithstanding
9 the provisions of this subsection, nothing in this section may be construed to abate the authority
10 of the department to:

11 (A) Restrict the subdivision or development of a tract for any more intense or higher density
12 occupancy than a single-family dwelling unit;

13 (B) Propose or enforce rules applicable to single-family dwelling units for single-family
14 dwelling unit sanitary sewerage disposal systems; or

15 (C) Restrict any subdivision or development which might endanger the public health, the
16 sanitary condition of streams, or sources of water supply.

17 (2) The sanitary condition of all institutions and schools, whether public or private, public
18 conveyances, dairies, slaughterhouses, workshops, factories, labor camps, all other places open
19 to the general public and inviting public patronage or public assembly, or tendering to the public
20 any item for human consumption and places where trades or industries are conducted;

21 (3) Occupational and industrial health hazards, the sanitary conditions of streams, sources
22 of water supply, sewerage facilities, and plumbing systems and the qualifications of personnel
23 connected with any of those facilities, without regard to whether the supplies or systems are
24 publicly or privately owned; and the design of all water systems, plumbing systems, sewerage
25 systems, sewage treatment plants, excreta disposal methods, and swimming pools in this state,
26 whether publicly or privately owned: *Provided*, That the secretary may not promulgate rules that
27 require a public water supply system or business to have backflow prevention assemblies
28 inspected more frequently than once in three years for a low-hazard system, which is defined as
29 a hazard that could cause aesthetic problems or have a detrimental secondary effect on the
30 quality of the public potable water supply: *Provided, however*, That a high-hazard system, which
31 is defined as a hazard that is conducive to the introduction of waterborne disease organisms, or
32 harmful chemical, physical, or radioactive substances into a public water system, and that
33 presents an unreasonable risk to health, shall be inspected annually.

34 (4) Safe drinking water, including:

35 (A) The maximum contaminant levels to which all public water systems must conform in
36 order to prevent adverse effects on the health of individuals and, if appropriate, treatment
37 techniques that reduce the contaminant or contaminants to a level which will not adversely affect
38 the health of the consumer. The rule shall contain provisions to protect and prevent contamination
39 of wellheads and well fields used by public water supplies so that contaminants do not reach a
40 level that would adversely affect the health of the consumer;

41 (B) The minimum requirements for: sampling and testing; system operation; public
42 notification by a public water system on being granted a variance or exemption, or upon failure to

43 comply with specific requirements of this section and rules promulgated under this section; record
44 keeping; laboratory certification; as well as procedures and conditions for granting variances and
45 exemptions to public water systems from state public water systems rules; and

46 (C) The requirements covering the production and distribution of bottled drinking water
47 and may establish requirements governing the taste, odor, appearance, and other consumer
48 acceptability parameters of drinking water;

49 (5) Food and drug standards, including cleanliness, proscription of additives, proscription
50 of sale, and other requirements in accordance with §16-7-1 *et seq.* of this code as are necessary
51 to protect the health of the citizens of this state;

52 (6) The training and examination requirements for emergency medical service attendants
53 and emergency medical care technician-paramedics; the designation of the health care facilities,
54 health care services, and the industries and occupations in the state that must have emergency
55 medical service attendants and emergency medical care technician-paramedics employed, and
56 the availability, communications and equipment requirements with respect to emergency medical
57 service attendants and to emergency medical care technician-paramedics. Any regulation of
58 emergency medical service attendants and emergency medical care technician-paramedics may
59 not exceed the provisions of §16-4C-1 *et seq.* of this code;

60 (7) The health and sanitary conditions of establishments commonly referred to as bed and
61 breakfast inns. For purposes of this article, "bed and breakfast inn" means an establishment
62 providing sleeping accommodations and, at a minimum, a breakfast for a fee. The secretary may
63 not require an owner of a bed and breakfast providing sleeping accommodations of six or fewer
64 rooms to install a restaurant-style or commercial food service facility. The secretary may not
65 require an owner of a bed and breakfast providing sleeping accommodations of more than six
66 rooms to install a restaurant-type or commercial food service facility if the entire bed and breakfast
67 inn or those rooms numbering above six are used on an aggregate of two weeks or less per year;

68 (8) Fees for services provided by the Bureau for Public Health including, but not limited to,
69 laboratory service fees, environmental health service fees, health facility fees, and permit fees;

70 (9) The collection of data on health status, the health system, and the costs of health care;

71 (10) The distribution of state aid to local health departments and basic public health
72 services funds in accordance with:

73 (A) Base allocation amount for each county;

74 (B) Establishment and administration of an emergency fund of no more than two percent
75 of the total annual funds of which unused amounts are to be distributed back to local boards of
76 health at the end of each fiscal year;

77 (C) A calculation of funds utilized for state support of local health departments;

78 (D) Distribution of remaining funds on a per capita weighted population approach which
79 factors coefficients for poverty, health status, population density, and health department
80 interventions for each county and a coefficient which encourages counties to merge in the
81 provision of public health services; and

82 (E) The provisions of this subdivision are in effect until the performance standard funding
83 formula is created and established by legislative rule.

84 (b) The secretary shall not review any repair or modernization of equipment at a public
85 pool facility as long as such activity does not change the scope of the facility or its current use
86 and such activity does not exceed \$25,000 in planned cost.

§16-1-9a. Regulation of public water systems.

1 (a) The secretary shall regulate public water systems as prescribed in this section.

2 (b) The secretary shall establish by legislative rule, in accordance with §29A-3-1 *et seq.*
3 of this code:

4 (1) The maximum contaminant levels to which all public water systems shall conform in
5 order to prevent adverse effects on the health of individuals;

6 (2) Treatment techniques that reduce the contaminant or contaminants to a level which
7 will not adversely affect the health of the consumer;

8 (3) Provisions to protect and prevent contamination of wellheads and well fields used by
9 public water supplies so that contaminants do not reach a level that would adversely affect the
10 health of the consumer;

11 (4) Minimum requirements for:

12 (A) Sampling and testing;

13 (B) System operation;

14 (C) Public notification by a public water system on being granted a variance or exemption
15 or upon failure to comply with specific requirements of this section and regulations promulgated
16 under this section;

17 (D) Recordkeeping;

18 (E) Laboratory certification; and

19 (F) Procedures and conditions for granting variances and exemptions to public water
20 systems from state public water systems' regulations;

21 (5) Requirements covering the production and distribution of bottled drinking water;

22 (6) Requirements governing the taste, odor, appearance, and other consumer
23 acceptability parameters of drinking water;

24 (7) Any requirements for a water supply system the commissioner determines is
25 necessary to be equipped with a backflow prevention assembly, all maintenance activities must
26 be documented and provided to the commissioner upon request: *Provided*, That the secretary
27 may not require inspection more frequently than once in three years for a low-hazard system,
28 which is defined as a hazard that could cause aesthetic problems or have a detrimental secondary
29 effect on the quality of the public potable water supply: *Provided, however*, That a high-hazard
30 system, which is defined as a hazard that is conducive to the introduction of waterborne disease

31 organisms, or harmful chemical, physical, or radioactive substances into a public water system,
32 and that presents an unreasonable risk to health, shall be inspected annually;

33 (8) Any other requirement the secretary finds necessary to effectuate the provisions of this
34 article.

35 (c) The secretary, or his or her authorized representative or designee, may enter any part
36 of a public water system, whether or not the system is in violation of a legal requirement, for the
37 purpose of inspecting, sampling, or testing and shall be furnished records or information
38 reasonably required for a complete inspection.

39 (d) The secretary, or his or her authorized representative or designee, may conduct an
40 evaluation necessary to assure the public water system meets federal safe drinking water
41 requirements. The public water system shall provide a written response to the commissioner
42 within 30 days of receipt of the evaluation by the public water system addressing corrective
43 actions to be taken as a result of the evaluation.

44 (e)(1) Any individual or entity who violates any provision of this article, or any of the rules
45 or orders issued pursuant to this article, is liable for a civil penalty not less than \$1,000 nor more
46 than \$5,000. Each day's violation shall constitute a separate offense.

47 (2) For a willful violation of a provision of this article, or of any of the rules or orders issued
48 under this article, an individual or entity shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000
49 and each day's violation shall be grounds for a separate penalty.

50 (3) Civil penalties are payable to the secretary. All moneys collected under this section
51 shall be deposited into a restricted account known as the Safe Drinking Water Fund. All moneys
52 deposited into the fund shall be used by the secretary to provide technical assistance to public
53 water systems.

54 (f) The secretary, or his or her authorized representative or designee, may also seek
55 injunctive relief in the circuit court of the county in which all or part of the public water system is
56 located for threatened or continuing violations.

57 (g) By July 1, 2020, a public water system supplying water to the public within the state
58 shall immediately, but in no instance later than six hours, report the occurrence and the lifting of
59 each advisory to local departments of health and to local office of emergency management 911
60 answering point.

61 (h) By January 1, 2022, a public water system shall make available to interested customers
62 boiled water advisories promptly through a text or a voice alert mass notification system.

The Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Delegates hereby certify that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

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Clerk of the Senate

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Clerk of the House of Delegates

Originated in the Senate.

In effect 90 days from passage.

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within is this the.....
Day of, 2026.

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Governor