

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2017 SESSION

## CHAPTER 543

*An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 15.2 a chapter numbered 60.01, consisting of sections numbered 15.2-6015.1 through 15.2-6015.5, relating to the creation of the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority; report.*

[H 2474]

Approved March 16, 2017

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 15.2 a chapter numbered 60.01, consisting of sections numbered 15.2-6015.1 through 15.2-6015.5, as follows:**

*CHAPTER 60.01.*

*VIRGINIA COALFIELDS EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY.*

**§ 15.2-6015.1. Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority; purpose.**

*The Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority (the Authority) is established as a body politic and corporate, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth. The Authority shall have the powers and duties hereinafter conferred in this chapter.*

*The primary purpose of the Authority is to improve the transportation into, from, within, and through Southwest Virginia, assist in regional economic development, and generally enhance highway safety in the affected localities.*

*The Coalfields Expressway, designated as U.S. Route 121 and a Congressional High Priority Corridor, is a proposed four-lane, limited-access highway to provide a modern, safe, and efficient transportation artery through the coalfields region of far Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia.*

*The proposed expressway is designed to provide safe and rapid access to communities along the corridor, with interchanges connecting citizens of Pound, Clintwood, Clinchco, Haysi, Breaks, Grundy, and Slate.*

*It is hereby further declared that the foregoing is a public purpose and use for which public moneys may be spent and such activity will serve a public purpose in providing jobs to the citizens of the Commonwealth.*

*The exercise of the powers granted by this chapter shall be in all respects for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Commonwealth, particularly the affected localities, for the increase of their commerce and for the promotion of their safety, health, welfare, convenience, and prosperity.*

**§ 15.2-6015.2. Membership; terms; quorum; meetings.**

*The Authority shall have a total membership of 12 members that shall consist of nine nonlegislative citizen members and three ex officio members. Nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed as follows: six members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, two of whom shall be residents of Buchanan County, two of whom shall be residents of Dickenson County, and two of whom shall be residents of Wise County, and three members to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, one of whom shall be a resident of Buchanan County, one of whom shall be a resident of Dickenson County, and one of whom shall be a resident of Wise County. The chairmen of the boards of supervisors of Buchanan, Dickenson, and Wise Counties or their designees shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the Authority shall be citizens of the Commonwealth.*

*Ex officio members of the Authority shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. All members may be reappointed.*

*After the initial staggering of terms, nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed for a term of four years.*

*The Authority shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The meetings of the Authority shall be held at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the members so request.*

**§ 15.2-6015.3. Compensation; expenses.**

*Members shall receive such compensation for the performance of their duties as provided in § 2.2-2813. All members shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825. Funding for the costs of compensation and expenses of the members shall be provided by the Virginia Coalfields Economic Development Authority.*

**§ 15.2-6015.4. Powers and duties of the Authority; report.**

*The Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority shall have the following powers and duties:*

1. *Coordinate with counties, municipalities, state and federal agencies, public nonprofit corporations, private corporations, associations, partnerships, and individuals for the purpose of planning, assisting, and establishing recreational, tourism, industrial, economic, and community development of the proposed Coalfields Expressway for the benefit of the Commonwealth.*

2. *Work with surrounding states in developing the Coalfields Expressway in the Commonwealth, in an effort to link Interstates 64 and 77 in West Virginia with Route 23 in Virginia, which links to interstates in Kentucky and Tennessee.*

3. *Submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports. The chairman shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Authority no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.*

**§ 15.2-6015.5. Staffing.**

*The Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority shall provide assistance to the Authority, upon request.*

**2. That the initial appointments of nonlegislative citizen members of the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority shall be staggered as follows: one nonlegislative citizen member from each of the three represented counties for a term of two years appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; one nonlegislative citizen member from each of the three represented counties for a term of three years appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; and one nonlegislative citizen member from each of the three represented counties for a term of four years appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates.**