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Manufactured housing regulators go to bat for flooding victims

CHARLESTON – Manufactured housing regulators agreed Thursday to ask Gov. Manchin for an extension of the time for flood victims to employ a sales tax break on the sales of homes in recently flooded counties.

Manchin issued orders to exempt flood victims in Calhoun, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Raleigh and Wyoming counties from paying sales taxes on the purchases of manufactured homes to replace homes damaged or destroyed by flooding. The extension goes through July 10.

The governor's June 12 news release said the extension would not be available in Logan and Boone counties, which were included in the original sales tax exemption.

Steve Brown, co-president of the West Virginia Housing Institute Inc., said the time limits imposed for the tax break are not giving flood victims sufficient time to file all the paperwork and obtain the tax break. He said the exemption also should be extended in Logan and Boone counties. WVHI is the industry trade association.

Brown, of Hurricane, co-owns The Home Show, an 11-location manufactured housing sales business, with his wife, Pam.

On Thursday, WVHI Treasurer George Gunnell asked the West Virginia Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Board to write a letter to ask Manchin to support the sales tax exemption for victims in Logan and Boone counties. The State Board regulates the industry.

"Sounds like a great idea to me," State Board Chairman and Labor Commissioner David Mullins said.

The board voted unanimously to have Mullins write a letter to Manchin asking that the governor also provide additional extension time for victims in Logan and Boone counties.

Brown; Gunnell; and WVHI Vice President Karen Bailey, owner of Southern Homes Inc. of Pineville, believe a further extension of time will be necessary for the tax break even after July 10 because of the slowness of processing paperwork related to the flooding.