

April 1, 2009

Governor signs repeal bill, change effective immediately, returns law

CHARLESTON — Despite powerful opposition from the state Division of Labor, Gov. Manchin has signed into law a bill that repeals the controversial dual licensing system that has troubled the manufactured housing industry.

The bill was the central piece of legislation sought for the industry this year by the West Virginia Housing Institute Inc.

DOL had the law changed last year to eliminate the old system that allowed a contractor to work on a manufactured home by subcontracting with a dealer. The DOL said the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development sought the change.

In fact, the federal standards the modification was supposed to deal with have not been put into place yet, an issue WVHI pointed out to lawmakers. The bill was signed April 1.

Division of Labor Commissioner David Mullins repeatedly appeared before legislative committees to stop the WVHI initiative. The bill passed the House of Delegates 98-0 and the state Senate 33-0.

The law, which is effective immediately, repeals last year's enactment, which said the subcontractor agreements no longer would be effective.

"We must be extremely careful now about how the Division of Labor is going to react to this change," WVHI Co-President Kevin Wilfong of Fairmont said.

Wilfong, Co-President Steve Brown of Hurricane, the WVHI board of directors and many members of WVHI were active in encouraging lawmakers and the governor to approve the change.