

Performance Review:

Department of Transportation, West Virginia Public Port Authority.

Agency Purposes:

The Port Authority was primarily established to facilitate economic transportation opportunities, foster the development of intermodalism, authorize the establishment of local port authority districts, and promote tourism.

What Did PERD Find?

The Legislative Auditor finds that the Port Authority receives no funding, has no employees or future projects, and holds no benefit to the state of West Virginia. Additionally, the agency is currently inactive, does not implement key duties and responsibilities designated by the W. Va. State Code, and has incurred more expenditures than revenue in recent years.

Since 2005, the Port Authority pursued two major projects that did not benefit the state or achieve target goals. One of these projects, the Heartland Intermodal Gateway (HIG), continues to generate expenses for the State, and is scheduled to be sold in an auction (see figure below).

PERD's Objectives:

The objective of this review was to determine the level of benefit the Port Authority provides to the state of West Virginia, and whether there is a continued need for the agency's existence.

Key Recommendations:

The Port Authority should continue to oversee the process of selling the HIG facility to the highest bidder, as currently scheduled.

The agency should confirm the existence of any legally-binding operator agreement between the Port Authority and any active local port authority district. In the event such an agreement exists and is legally valid, the Legislative Auditor recommends that full and absolute independence be granted to the local port authority, so that the district may continue to operate as an individual, self-sustaining entity.

The Legislature should consider eliminating the Port Authority once outstanding invoices are paid, and the HIG facility has been sold.

Figure 2
Aerial View of the HIG Facility



Source: Joe R. Pyle Complete Auction & Realty Service.

- The Port Authority does not actively oversee any local port authority districts.
- The agency has no source of revenue and has not received a federal grant since FY 2015.
- The Port Authority Board of Directors does not meet regularly.
- The agency's website is outdated, which risks providing the public with misinformation.
- The West Virginia Department of Transportation agrees with the overall findings of this report.