



The Senate of West Virginia
Charleston

cc: Judy Rodd
3/22/05
djh

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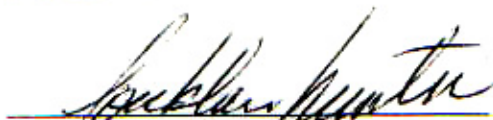
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**Parsons Advocate
Letter to the Editor**

This is in response to Senator Minear's comments about Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 38 to study transforming current state parks into national parks. Senator John Yoder, Republican from Jefferson County, approached me about co-sponsoring a resolution proposing to study several areas in West Virginia — nearly all of which are already owned by West Virginia or the federal government — to see if it was feasible to convert some of the area into a National Park. While I have always been concerned about the fact that 65% of the land in Tucker County is owned by the Federal or State Government, I am willing to look at the pros and cons of converting Blackwater & Canaan Valley State Parks into a National Park.

The reasons are: First and foremost, we currently get no tax revenue from the state owned land and, if it were owned by the Federal Government, we would get some payment in lieu of taxes from this branch. Secondly, the employees at Blackwater and Canaan Valley State Park are grossly underpaid, and many are part-time employees without benefits. Could they be hired as federal employees, which would probably double their salaries and benefits? Lastly, would national exposure bring more people in to frequent the park and local businesses? I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT TAKING PRIVATE LAND, WE ALREADY OWN THE PARKS. Even part of the Black Water View Shed is owned by the state, but if we can convert a state owned land into federal parks, and increase Tucker County's revenue/taxes from the Feds; get more and better jobs; and help to increase local businesses and jobs, then I believe we should consider it. The resolution is only a study in order to obtain answers to these questions.



Senator Jon Blair Hunter
14th Senatorial District