STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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CHARLESTON, WV 25305
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EARL RAY TOMBLIN
GOVERNOR

April 1, 2016

**VIA HAND DELIVERY**

The Honorable Natalie E. Tennant
Secretary of State
State of West Virginia
Building 1, Suite 157-K
State Capitol
Charleston, WV 25305

Re: Enrolled Committee Substitute for House Bill 4668

Dear Secretary of State Tennant:

Pursuant to the provisions of section fourteen, article VII of the Constitution of West Virginia, I hereby disapprove Enrolled Committee Substitute for House Bill 4668. This bill increases the allowable threshold of coal severance tax revenue distributed to county and local governments that may be budgeted for personal services from one-fourth to one-half. When the Legislature originally contemplated distributions of coal severance tax revenue to county and local governments, it was intended that such funds would be used to build infrastructure and public facilities to benefit the local citizens. It was not intended that such funds be used to increase the staff and payrolls of the beneficiary governments.

For a variety of reasons, we now face a time when coal severance tax revenues are becoming more volatile and less certain. When coal severance tax revenues are the basis for an employee's paycheck, it may allow a local government to hire more personnel during more prosperous times; but when we face tough times in the coal industry, as we do right now, more layoffs are likely to occur. Increasing the percentage of such funds that may be used for personal services will only exacerbate this volatility. For this reason, I disapprove this bill.

Sincerely,

Earl Ray Tomblin

Earl Ray Tomblin
Governor

cc: The Hon. Tim Armstead
Speaker of the House of Delegates

The Hon. William P. Cole III
President of the Senate