

SENATE BILL 735

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2002 Regular Session
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By: **Senator Middleton (Chairman, Task Force on Resource Based Industry in Maryland) and Senator Stoltzfus**

Introduced and read first time: February 1, 2002

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force on Resource Industry Business Development**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force on Resource Industry Business
4 Development; providing for a certain membership of the Task Force; requiring
5 the Task Force to establish a certain workgroup, perform certain functions, and
6 report to certain persons by a certain date; authorizing the Task Force to
7 appoint certain committees; providing a certain staff for the Task Force;
8 prohibiting certain persons from the receipt of certain compensation, and
9 authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; providing for the
10 termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Task Force on Resource
11 Industry Business Development.

12 **Preamble**

13 WHEREAS, Chapter 433 of the Acts of 2000 enacted the Task Force on Resource
14 Based Industry in Maryland in order to examine the need for, and feasibility of,
15 establishing a finance development authority to assist the State's farming, fishing,
16 forestry, and mining extraction industries with loans, financing, training, and
17 technical and business planning assistance services; and

18 WHEREAS, In its preliminary findings and recommendations issued in January
19 2001, the Task Force recommended that a comprehensive interagency needs
20 assessment be conducted in order to enhance understanding of the loans and grants
21 that would be necessary to address the initial needs of resource based industries; and

22 WHEREAS, Chapter 196 of the Acts of 2001 extended the Task Force for an
23 additional year in order to continue its work in the study and development of these
24 rural-based business operations; and

25 WHEREAS, An interagency workgroup of Task Force members met on a regular
26 basis in order to focus the work of the group and to coordinate the completion of the
27 needs assessment; and

28 WHEREAS, In light of the completed needs assessment, it is the understanding
29 of the Task Force that in today's rural economy there is no great demand for

1 additional lending mechanisms in order to support start-up needs of resource based
2 industries, and thus the establishment of a finance development authority is not
3 recommended at this time; and

4 WHEREAS, Although the original charge of the Task Force on Resource Based
5 Industry in Maryland has been accomplished and that task force sunsets as of
6 January 31, 2002, there is still a great need for government attention to several areas
7 that are integral to the continued operation and success of rural industries; and

8 WHEREAS, In order to maintain resource based industries as the backbone of
9 the rural economy, State effort should now turn to other development concerns such
10 as public education on the Statewide benefits of rural-based industry, better
11 communication between business operators and State agencies, innovation in
12 production techniques and technology transfer, and entrepreneurial training in
13 management and marketing skills; and

14 WHEREAS, Given the education and perspective that task force members have
15 acquired over the term of the Task Force on Resource Based Industry in Maryland, it
16 is their unanimous recommendation that a new task force be fashioned in order to
17 carry forward the State's support and enhancement of economic growth opportunities
18 for rural industry; and

19 WHEREAS, It is therefore necessary and appropriate to reconfigure the first
20 task force appointed in this area, to expand the areas of expertise represented in the
21 membership, to change the name of the task force and to redefine its charge, and to
22 create the Task Force on Resource Industry Business Development; now, therefore,

23 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
24 MARYLAND, That:

25 (a) There is a Task Force on Resource Industry Business Development.

26 (b) The Task Force consists of the following 28 members:

27 (1) two members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President
28 of the Senate;

29 (2) two members of the Maryland House of Delegates, appointed by the
30 Speaker of the House;

31 (3) (i) the Secretary of Business and Economic Development, or the
32 Secretary's designee; and

33 (ii) three economic development officials from rural counties,
34 selected by the Secretary of Business and Economic Development as follows:

35 1. one from the Eastern Shore of Maryland;

36 2. one from the Western Shore of Maryland; and

- 1 3. one from Southern Maryland;
- 2 (4) the Secretary of Agriculture, or the Secretary's designee;
- 3 (5) two representatives of the Department of Natural Resources,
4 appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources:
 - 5 (i) one from the Forest Service; and
 - 6 (ii) one from the Fisheries Service;
- 7 (6) the Executive Director of the Maryland Food Center Authority, or the
8 Executive Director's designee;
- 9 (7) the Director of the Maryland Cooperative Extension, or the Director's
10 designee;
- 11 (8) (i) the Executive Director of the Forvm for Rural Maryland, or the
12 Executive Director's designee; and
 - 13 (ii) an economic development representative who specializes in
14 agricultural economic development, appointed by the Executive Director of the Forvm
15 for Rural Maryland;
- 16 (9) the Chair of the Maryland Forestry Task Force, or the Chair's
17 designee;
- 18 (10) a representative of the Western Maryland "One Maryland" Task
19 Force, selected by the members of the Western Maryland Task Force;
- 20 (11) a representative of the Eastern Shore "One Maryland" Task Force,
21 selected by the members of the Eastern Shore Task Force;
- 22 (12) a representative of the Maryland Farm Bureau;
- 23 (13) a representative of the Maryland Forests Association;
- 24 (14) a representative of the Maryland Saltwater Sportsfishermen's
25 Association;
- 26 (15) a representative of the Maryland Aggregates Association;
- 27 (16) a representative of the Maryland Watermen's Association;
- 28 (17) a representative of the Maryland Nursery and Landscape
29 Association; and
- 30 (18) one representative from each of the following regional councils,
31 appointed by the respective council's executive director:
 - 32 (i) Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland;

- 1 (ii) Tri-County Council for Western Maryland;
- 2 (iii) Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore; and
- 3 (iv) Mid-Shore Regional Council.

4 (c) The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall jointly
5 designate two of the members as cochairs of the Task Force.

6 (d) The Task Force shall:

7 (1) establish an interagency workgroup and its specific charge within the
8 operation of the Task Force;

9 (2) study the current and anticipated needs for grants and loans for
10 specific elements of rural business development, such as niche market development,
11 technology transfer, research and development, and micro-enterprise development
12 for resource based industries;

13 (3) consider the factors involved in, and investigate the feasibility of, the:

14 (i) creation of a staff position to act as an information
15 clearinghouse for resource based industries;

16 (ii) creation or enhancement of a pool of grant funds for resource
17 based innovation and research; and

18 (iii) sponsorship of education and networking seminars to enhance
19 the quality and quantity of economic development opportunities available to rural
20 businesses;

21 (4) develop specific recommendations for improving economic
22 development of resource based industries and related innovation, information
23 sharing, technology transfer, coordination, and business education and training;

24 (5) monitor:

25 (i) the performance and progress of State agencies in their service
26 of resource based industries; and

27 (ii) relevant studies of rural-based business, including those
28 conducted by the University of Maryland and Salisbury University; and

29 (6) report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in
30 accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly
31 on or before September 30, 2003.

32 (e) As necessary and appropriate, the Task Force may appoint ad hoc
33 committees to assist the Task Force in any aspect of the development of resource
34 industry business opportunities and markets.

1 (f) The Department of Legislative Services, with the assistance of the Forvm
2 for Rural Maryland, shall provide staff for the Task Force.

3 (g) A member of the Task Force or of an ad hoc committee of the Task Force
4 may not receive compensation for serving on the Task Force or committee, but is
5 entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations,
6 as provided in the State budget.

7 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
8 June 1, 2002. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 5 months and, at the
9 end of October 31, 2003, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this
10 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.