

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2002 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**  
**Revised**

Senate Bill 544

(Senators Middleton and Stoltzfus)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Appropriations

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**Task Force to Study the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation**

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This bill establishes an 18-member Task Force to Study the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), describes its composition and duties, and requires the task force to meet at least once a month. The task force must submit a report of its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly before June 1, 2004. The bill requires the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) to coordinate with other State units to provide staffing for the task force.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2002 and sunsets May 31, 2004.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MDA and MDP are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The task force must study and make recommendations for: (1) guidelines for farmland preservation acreage goals for each county that complement the State goal; (2) guidelines for designation by counties and certification by the State of

priority preservation areas; (3) increased funding from new sources for the program that is targeted to priority preservation areas and that enables the program to achieve its legislative goals; (4) other revenue sources for the program that provide the level of funding that enables the program to achieve its legislative goals; (5) a schedule to focus new funding increasingly over a four-year period to priority preservation areas; (6) the creation and funding of a statewide critical farms program and methods to encourage the creation of county critical farms programs; (7) changes in provisions about tenant houses; (8) current and alternative easement valuation systems under the program; (9) an installment purchase option; and (10) other appropriate changes.

The bill provides that subject to the approval of the Governor, the same 18 members designated or appointed to serve on the task force to study MALPF established by Chapter 634 of 2000 automatically qualify to serve on the task force established by the bill.

**Current Law:** The task force to study MALPF created by Chapter 634 of 2000 terminated July 31, 2001.

**Background:** The Maryland General Assembly created MALPF in 1977 to, among other things, protect agricultural land in the State. Chapter 634 of 2000 created a task force to study MALPF. The task force was required to: (1) study the current program and practices of the foundation; (2) study the financial standing of the foundation; (3) review and make recommendations on legislation affecting the foundation considered by the General Assembly in the 2000 session; and (4) make recommendations to improve the program, practices, and financial standing of the foundation. In its August 2001 report to the Governor and the General Assembly, the task force recommended, among other things, that its charge be extended to complete the development of proposals for the 2003 legislative session. This bill is a direct result of the task force's recommendation.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 810 (Delegate Stocksdales, *et al.*) (Task Force to Study the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation) - Appropriations.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland Department of Planning, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2002  
ncs/jr Revised - Correction - February 26, 2002  
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