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By: **Delegates James, Boschert, Heller, Howard, Ramirez, and Ross**

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2006

Assigned to: Ways and Means

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Income Tax Credit for Preservation and Conservation Easements - County**  
3 **Tax Credit Authorized**

4 FOR the purpose of authorizing the governing body of a county to allow, by local law  
5 or ordinance, a certain credit to be claimed against the county income tax for  
6 preservation and conservation easements; authorizing a county governing body  
7 to determine the amount of the credit and to place any limitations determined to  
8 be appropriate on the credit; requiring a county that adopts a certain credit  
9 against the county income tax to notify the Comptroller by a certain date prior  
10 to the taxable year in which the credit is applicable; and generally relating to  
11 authorizing a county to permit a certain credit to be claimed against the county  
12 income tax for preservation and conservation easements.

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
14 Article - Tax - General  
15 Section 10-723  
16 Annotated Code of Maryland  
17 (2004 Replacement Volume and 2005 Supplement)

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
19 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

20 **Article - Tax - General**

21 10-723.

22 (a) (1) [An] SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION, AN individual  
23 may claim a credit against the State income tax [as provided in this section] AND  
24 AGAINST THE COUNTY INCOME TAX for an easement conveyed to the Maryland  
25 Environmental Trust or the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation for  
26 the purpose of preserving open space, natural resources, agriculture, forest land,  
27 watersheds, significant ecosystems, viewsheds, or historic properties, if:

28 (i) the easement is perpetual; and

1 (ii) the easement is accepted and approved by the Board of Public  
2 Works.

3 (2) Subject to subsection (c)(2) of this section, the credit under this  
4 section shall be allowed for the taxable year in which the donation is approved by the  
5 Board of Public Works.

6 (b) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the amount of the credit  
7 allowed under this section is the amount by which the fair market value of the  
8 property before the conveyance of the easement exceeds the fair market value of the  
9 property after the conveyance of the easement.

10 (2) The fair market value of the property before and after the conveyance  
11 of the easement shall be substantiated by an appraisal prepared by a certified real  
12 estate appraiser, as defined under § 16-101 of the Business Occupations and  
13 Professions Article.

14 (3) The amount of the credit shall be reduced by the amount of any  
15 payment received for the easement.

16 (c) (1) For any taxable year, the credit allowed under this section may not  
17 exceed the lesser of:

18 (i) the State income tax for that taxable year; or

19 (ii) \$5,000.

20 (2) If the credit otherwise allowable under subsection (b) of this section  
21 exceeds the limit under paragraph (1) of this subsection, an individual may apply the  
22 excess as a credit against the State income tax for succeeding taxable years until the  
23 earlier of:

24 (i) the full amount of the excess is used; or

25 (ii) the expiration of the 15th taxable year after the taxable year in  
26 which the donation was approved by the Board of Public Works.

27 (3) For each taxable year, the amount carried forward to the taxable year  
28 under paragraph (2) of this subsection may not exceed the limit under paragraph (1)  
29 of this subsection.

30 (d) The credit under this section may not be claimed for a required dedication  
31 of open space for the purpose of fulfilling density requirements to obtain a subdivision  
32 or building permit.

33 (E) (1) (I) A CREDIT MAY NOT BE CLAIMED UNDER THIS SECTION  
34 AGAINST THE COUNTY INCOME TAX UNLESS THE GOVERNING BODY OF A COUNTY  
35 HAS AUTHORIZED, BY LOCAL LAW OR ORDINANCE, A CREDIT AGAINST THE COUNTY  
36 INCOME TAX AS PROVIDED IN THIS SUBSECTION.

1 (II) A COUNTY GOVERNING BODY MAY DETERMINE THE AMOUNT  
2 OF A CREDIT AND MAY PLACE ANY ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS THAT THE COUNTY  
3 GOVERNING BODY DETERMINES ARE APPROPRIATE ON THE CREDIT AUTHORIZED  
4 AGAINST THE COUNTY INCOME TAX UNDER THIS SUBSECTION.

5 (2) IF A COUNTY PROVIDES FOR A CREDIT AGAINST THE COUNTY  
6 INCOME TAX UNDER THIS SECTION, ON OR BEFORE JULY 1 PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING  
7 OF THE FIRST TAXABLE YEAR FOR WHICH IT IS APPLICABLE, THE COUNTY SHALL  
8 GIVE THE COMPTROLLER NOTICE OF THE COUNTY CREDIT.

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
10 June 1, 2006.