

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 909

(Senator Middleton)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

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**Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation - Board of Trustees -  
Young Farmer**

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This bill expands the membership of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation's Board of Trustees to include a farmer representative appointed from a list of nominees submitted by the Young Farmers Advisory Board.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2008.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for the additional trustee are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** MALPF was established by the General Assembly in 1977 and is part of the Maryland Department of Agriculture. MALPF purchases agricultural preservation easements that forever restrict development on prime farmland and woodland. MALPF settled on its first purchased easement in October 1980. Through fiscal 2007, MALPF had cumulatively purchased, or had a pending contract to purchase, permanent conservation easements on 1,933 farms covering 265,691 acres.

MALPF is governed by a board of trustees. In addition to several *ex-officio* members, there are eight at-large members appointed by the Governor. At least five of the at-large members must be farmer representatives from different areas of the State that are actively engaged in or retired from active farming. Three of the five farmer representatives are appointed from lists submitted by the Maryland Agricultural Commission, the Maryland Farm Bureau, and the Maryland State Grange. The chair of the board must be appointed by the Governor from among the at-large trustees. Trustees may be reimbursed for travel and other expenses.

Chapter 517 of 2004 established a 12-member Young Farmers Advisory Board within MDA to, among other things • communicate the importance of young and beginning farmers to agriculture in the State; • identify and address issues relating to young and beginning farmers in the State and make recommendations to the Maryland Agricultural Commission; and • establish committees as necessary to develop projects relating to the aspects of life for young and beginning farmers. MDA staffs the advisory board. The advisory board was scheduled to terminate at the end of September 30, 2007, but Chapter 517 of 2007 repealed the termination date.

**Background:** According to U.S. Department of Agriculture data, there were 12,000 farms in Maryland covering roughly 2 million acres in 2006. Under the most recent Census of Agriculture in 2002, the average age of a principal farm operator in Maryland was 56 and the average net cash income of a farm operation was \$20,230.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 6, 2008  
mll/lgc

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