

forestland, that forestland is rapidly disappearing with an estimated 566 square miles or 13 percent (about the size of Baltimore County) between 1964 and 1976 being converted to some other use; and

WHEREAS, The retention of forestland is vital for the survival of the Chesapeake Bay and other water sheds, the maintenance of a large forest products industry, and the health and well-being of the State's citizens; and

WHEREAS, Continuing pressures, by way of high taxes, the encroachment of strip and scattered development in rural areas and nearby cities, and growing urbanization, threaten the destruction of Maryland's forestlands; and

WHEREAS, Demand for softwood sawtimber is projected to increase 57 percent by the year 2030 and demand for hardwood sawtimber is projected to increase by 160 percent over the same period; and

WHEREAS, Maryland's wood related industries process an estimated \$200 million worth of Maryland wood and provide approximately 5,000 jobs in Maryland, representing an estimated annual payroll of \$40 million; and

WHEREAS, The Forest Conservation and Management Program administered by the Department of Natural Resources with the assistance of the Department of Assessments and Taxation has only been minimally successful in meeting the General Assembly's intent to retain, conserve, and manage the forestlands of Maryland; and

WHEREAS, Current real property tax assessment practices may be less than conducive to retention of the forestland; and

WHEREAS, Improved resource management and tax assessment practices are needed to mitigate increasing pressures on our forestlands; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That a Task Force be established consisting of ~~14~~ 17 members to review and evaluate management and taxation of Maryland forestlands; and to recommend measures to optimize use and preservation of these resources; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the task force shall be composed of: one member representing the Maryland Forest Service; two members representing the Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy District Boards appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources; one member representing the Maryland Forestry Association; one member who is a forest landowner; one member who operates a sawmill or pulp mill; three two members of the Senate of Maryland ~~appointed by the President of the Senate of Maryland,~~ and three two members of the House of Delegates appointed by the ~~Speaker of the House of Delegates~~ Legislative Policy Committee; one member