

(c) The first woman's request for the right to vote was voiced by Margaret Brent in 1647; and

(d) The first religious tolerance act was adopted in 1649; and

WHEREAS, Historic St. Mary's City is one of the oldest and best preserved early colonial town sites remaining in America; the first Roman Catholic chapel in the English colonies was established there in 1635; the first use of town planning came in 1668; and the first printing press in the southern colonies came in 1685; and

WHEREAS, Events of tremendous historical significance to the development of the State of Maryland occurred at St. Mary's City, including: the first State House of Maryland in 1634; the first industries in Maryland – brick making and iron works – were established in the 1630s, the first mill operated in Maryland in 1635, and the first public inn opened in Maryland in 1638; the first Anglican church in Maryland in 1643; and the first official city in Maryland in 1668; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly wishes to fulfill its pledge to preserve and support Historic St. Mary's City and its archaeological treasures and ensure that its rich historical, ecological, and archaeological legacy will be developed and shared with the public in an appropriate and effective manner; and

WHEREAS, This Act aims to facilitate a more effective relationship with the General Assembly, the community, regional, statewide, and national organizations of similar interests, as well as with its highly successful neighbor, St. Mary's College of Maryland; now, therefore,

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

Article 83B – Department of Housing and Community Development

[Subtitle 2. Historic St. Mary's City Commission.]

[5-201.

(a) There is a Historic St. Mary's City Commission in the Department.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly to grant the Commission broad authority over its plans, proposals, and projects. However, a decision or determination that the Commission makes under authority specifically delegated to it by law shall be subject to concurrence by the Secretary, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.

(c) The power of the Secretary to transfer staff or functions of units in the Department does not apply to any staff of the Commission.]

[5-202.

The purpose of the Historic St. Mary's City Commission is to preserve the historic areas of St. Mary's City, to interpret findings related to the history of St. Mary's City, and to educate the public about the historical events which occurred in, or were related to, St. Mary's City.]