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(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) "BOARD" MEANS THE ~~BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE BOARD.~~

(3) "~~PROGRAM~~" "~~FUND~~" MEANS THE MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ~~PROGRAM FUND.~~

(B) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

(1) MANY NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE EXPERIENCE ~~FRUSTRATION~~ FISCAL DIFFICULTIES IN ADDRESSING THE AREAS OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY EDUCATION BECAUSE OF THE INADEQUACY OF FUNDING RESOURCES FOR THEM;

(2) THESE ORGANIZATIONS DO NOT HAVE THE ACCESS TO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SOURCES OF FUNDING THAT ARE GENERALLY MORE AVAILABLE TO NONPROFIT GROUPS THAT SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE METROPOLITAN AREAS OF THE STATE; AND

(3) AS A RESULT, THE RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE FACE A SERIOUS DEFICIT OF RESOURCES WHERE THE NEED, IN MANY INSTANCES, IS GREATEST.

(C) (1) THERE IS A MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ~~PROGRAM FUND~~ THAT SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS.

(2) THE PURPOSE OF THE ~~PROGRAM FUND~~ IS TO PROVIDE FUNDING:

(I) TO RURAL REGIONAL PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS WHOSE MISSIONS AND WORK HAVE STATEWIDE IMPLICATIONS AND MERIT STATE SUPPORT; AND

(II) TO AUGMENT THE EFFORTS OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY CENTERS THAT SERVE AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES BASED SMALL BUSINESSES IN RURAL AREAS THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGES. THE PROGRAM ALSO IS INTENDED TO AUGMENT THE EFFORTS OF RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES THAT SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES IN RURAL AREAS THROUGH ENHANCED TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

(D) (1) ~~BEGINNING WITH FISCAL YEAR 2001 AND IN FISCAL YEARS 2002, 2003, AND 2004, THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPROPRIATE TO THE BOARD \$742,000 IN EACH OF THOSE FISCAL YEARS FOR THE PURPOSE OF FUNDING THE PROGRAM.~~

(2) ~~FROM THE APPROPRIATION PROVIDED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE BOARD SHALL PROVIDE GRANTS IN EACH FISCAL YEAR TO THE FOLLOWING NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FOLLOWING AMOUNTS:~~