

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds that participation in Maryland's Agricultural Land Preservation Program is impacted by prices offered by developers for farmland; and

WHEREAS, Certain counties have developed their own innovative programs that seek to protect farmland; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds that counties able to effectively preserve farmland on the local level should be given the resources to do so out of existing Foundation funds; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly reasserts its strong commitment to preserving agricultural land in Maryland on a perpetual basis due to: (1) the positive economic contribution of the agricultural industry; and (2) the important role of farming in creating a quality environment; and

WHEREAS, The 1990 Maryland General Assembly sets forth in this Act a comprehensive legislative proposal designed to enhance and strengthen Maryland's agricultural preservation efforts, consistent with and responsive to the findings of the Joint Subcommittee; now, therefore,

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

**Article – State Finance and Procurement**

5-408.

(A) THERE IS WITHIN THE OFFICE A PROGRAM FOR CERTIFICATION OF EFFECTIVE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION PROGRAMS.

(B) A COUNTY MAY APPLY TO THE OFFICE AND THE MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION FOUNDATION FOR CERTIFICATION UNDER THIS SECTION ONLY IF THE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD AND THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE COUNTY BOTH:

(1) APPROVE THE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED AT THE COUNTY LEVEL AS BEING AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION; AND

(2) APPROVE THE COUNTY'S APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION.

(C) (1) A COUNTY MAY APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION UNDER THIS SECTION IF THE COUNTY HAS ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION OF FARMERS IN AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION EFFORTS AT THE COUNTY LEVEL, INCLUDING PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS OR FINANCIAL ENHANCEMENTS RELATED TO PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS, OUTSIDE OF THE STATE