

WHEREAS, The Maryland Department of Natural Resources owns more than 76,000 acres of land in Garrett County, comprising about 1 acre out of every 6 in the County; and

WHEREAS, The Department presently has authorization to increase its ownership to an amount that would constitute 21 percent of the County's area; and

WHEREAS, This land has been acquired incrementally during the past 70 years, with the result that the Department lands do not always comprise logical management units because of irregular boundaries, private in-holdings, isolation of parcels, and limited access; and

WHEREAS, This disjointed ownership pattern increases management costs and problems, limits public use and enjoyment of these lands, and does not necessarily correlate State ownership with the lands having the best resource value for the citizens of the State; and

WHEREAS, In adopting its first county-wide comprehensive development plan in 1974, Garrett County raised legitimate questions regarding the effect of Departmental land ownership on the local economy and land use patterns, and urged the Department to prepare its own comprehensive evaluation and long-range plan for patterns of retention, acquisition, and disposal of Departmental land; and

WHEREAS, In reviewing the draft of the County Plan, the Department stated in 1974 that "the Department needs to develop a formal plan for Departmental lands in Garrett County" and further stated that "we wish to commit ourselves now to this undertaking"; and

WHEREAS, Six and one-half years have elapsed since the Department expressed this commitment, during which time an initial draft plan was produced by Departmental staff, was rewritten, was thoroughly discussed with the relevant agencies within the Department, and was submitted to the Secretary in June, 1980; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General Assembly directs the Department of Natural Resources to complete its proposed long-range plan for land ownership in Garrett County, to initiate the process of public discussion of the plan, and to submit by submitting a draft of the plan to the Garrett County Commissioners and the General Assembly by January 1, 1982; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution be sent to the Honorable Harry Hughes, Governor of Maryland; the Garrett County Board of County Commissioners, P.O. Box 72, Oakland, Maryland 21550; and James B. Coulter, Secretary of Natural Resources, Tawes State Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.