

(v) the creation of tax credits or exemptions applicable to the production of ethanol, biodiesel, or other bio-energy alternatives;

(vi) the various methods used by local governments to assess the value of real property used for agriculture;

(vii) the existing tax incentives related to land conservation and preservation programs in the State, including the tax credit for preservation easements under § 10-723 of the Tax - General Article; and

(viii) any other option considered appropriate by the Task Force; and

(3) identify any new or additional tax incentives modifications to the current State tax structure that would help farmers to be better stewards of the land while maintaining the economic viability of farming in the State, including tax incentives for the utilization of best management practices associated with the improvement of water quality.

(g) On or before December 1, 2006, the Task Force shall report its preliminary findings and recommendations and, on or before October 1, 2007, the Task Force shall report its final findings and recommendations. The Task Force shall report both its preliminary and final findings and recommendations to the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, the House Ways and Means Committee, the House Environmental Matters Committee, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, and the Governor, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article.

SECTION 12. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That on or before December 31, 2006, the Department of Planning and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation shall jointly adopt regulations for the administration of the certification of county priority preservation areas under § 5-408 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

SECTION 13. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Department of Agriculture:

(a) shall review the condition of the Department's agricultural marketing program and information technology infrastructure; and

(b) on or before September 29, 2006, shall submit a report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on the level of additional funding that may be needed in order to meet existing and future needs for the marketing program and information technology, as well as potential resources needed to take full advantage of federal funding opportunities for agricultural industry support.

SECTION 14. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That to the extent funds are available, it is the intent of the General Assembly that the Governor provide a general fund appropriation for fiscal year 2008 that equals or exceeds the general fund appropriation provided for fiscal year 2007 for each of the agricultural marketing and rural assistance programs of a nonregulatory nature in Unit 12 of the Maryland Department of Agriculture.