

determination of the value, that the matter be referred to the property tax assessment appeal board as provided under § 3-107 of the Tax – Property Article, for arbitration as to the value of the easement.

(2) The value determined by that arbitration shall be binding upon the owner and the Foundation in a purchase of the easement made subsequent to the arbitration for a period of 2 years, unless the landowner and the Foundation agree upon a lesser value or the landowner or the Foundation appeals the results of the arbitration to the Maryland Tax Court, and either party may further appeal from the Tax Court as provided in § 13-532 of the Tax – General Article.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That counties are encouraged to provide property tax credits for agricultural districts.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before January 31, 2007, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation shall submit to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, a report outlining procedures, laws, and regulations that the Foundation determines to be necessary in order to implement the elimination of agricultural districts from the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program. The report shall include:

- (a) an implementation timeline;
- (b) statutory language for the repeal and reenactment of §§ 2-509 and 2-510 of the Agriculture Article, including the removal of the requirement for districts from the easement application process to become effective July 1, 2007, and the elimination of districts from the program to become effective June 30, 2008;
- (c) a process for county and State approval of easement applications;
- (d) a provision for optional county districts;
- (e) a provision that requires participating counties to establish a right-to-farm ordinance;
- (f) a provision that prohibits properties from being developed or subdivided during the easement application process; and
- (g) a provision that allows for the continuation of tax credits for existing districts.

~~SECTION 2. 4.~~ AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect ~~October~~ July 1, 2006.

Approved April 25, 2006.