WHEREAS, Maryland, like many other states, has been impacted by a national economic recession requiring State lawmakers to reduce State spending — through program elimination, reduction of entitlements, employee layoffs, and termination of local aid programs — by a cumulative amount of $2.1 billion during fiscal years 1991 through 1993; and

WHEREAS, State lawmakers concluded that reductions in State spending alone could not solve Maryland's fiscal dilemma in the face of the lingering recession and that revenue enhancements, primarily increased taxes, were in order for Maryland to comply with its constitutional mandate for an annual balanced budget, to maintain its coveted triple A bond credit rating, and to continue essential government services; and

WHEREAS, The national economy has not significantly improved and State lawmakers see escalating caseloads, litigation, court orders, unfunded federal mandates, and other mandated expenditures continuing to fuel spiraling demands on scarce financial resources to the point of creating a structural imbalance; and

WHEREAS, This structural imbalance is forecasted throughout the balance of the decade inasmuch as projected expenditures will outpace projected revenues by an estimated 2–3%, which translates into an annual deficit of at least $120 million; and

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland simply can no longer afford to conduct governmental business as usual and must expeditiously devise innovative, businesslike solutions to maintain fiscal solvency; and

WHEREAS, The Efficiency 2000 Commission will be charged with this task through a strengthened public/private partnership that is responsible for assessing, not regulating, current government policies and practices and advising the public and the public's elected officials on how to make government more responsive and accountable to the fiscal realities of the 1990's; and

WHEREAS, It is envisioned that the Efficiency 2000 Commission will make recommendations concerning, but not limited to, the following matters:

(1) shifting of services from the public sector to the private sector ("privatization") when it makes "good business sense" to do so without threatening the health, welfare, and well–being of Maryland's citizenry;

(2) eliminating certain programs and services, including a concomitant reduction of personnel, where unnecessary duplication and fragmentation is deemed to exist either at the State or local level;

(3) altering State/local fiscal relations with regard to funding and services that are deemed mutually beneficial because of the improved delivery and cost effectiveness of the alteration;

(4) reforming the State budget process to accord public managers greater flexibility to manage their operations through performance and compliance goals and to shift unused funds for new priorities;