

permitting processes for those sites, coordination site review and development;

5. identify, obtain, and expedite federal funding for development and construction of those sites; and
6. designate a coordinating officer to act as the State liaison on dredge material placement issues with federal, State, and local government.

Further, it is the intent of the General Assembly that:

1. open-water placement options for clean dredge material be available provided that such options be accomplished in an environmentally sound manner;
2. to the extent practical, the State should utilize other, less costly dredged material options in lieu of proceeding with Phase II of Poplar Island; and
3. if the deadlines for development of the strategic plan and the identification of sites in the upper Chesapeake Bay as stated above are not met by January 1, 1997, the Maryland Department of Transportation shall fund through existing resources an independent environmental impact assessment of the area known as Deep Trough as a potential site for the deposit of dredged materials. The scientific analysis is to be performed by an independent researcher and will include:
 - an analysis of the cost of using the Deep Trough site for depositing dredged materials;
 - environmental impact assessments of the effects of placing non-contaminated materials in the Deep Trough without actual placement of any material in the Deep Trough;
 - long-term and short-term environmental