

appoint certain committees; providing a certain staff for the Task Force; prohibiting certain persons from the receipt of certain compensation, and authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Task Force on Resource Industry Business Development.

Preamble

WHEREAS, Chapter 433 of the Acts of 2000 enacted the Task Force on Resource Based Industry in Maryland in order to examine the need for, and feasibility of, establishing a finance development authority to assist the State's farming, fishing, forestry, and mining extraction industries with loans, financing, training, and technical and business planning assistance services; and

WHEREAS, In its preliminary findings and recommendations issued in January, 2001, the Task Force recommended that a comprehensive interagency needs assessment be conducted in order to enhance understanding of the loans and grants that would be necessary to address the initial needs of resource based industries; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 196 of the Acts of 2001 extended the Task Force for an additional year in order to continue its work in the study and development of these rural-based business operations; and

WHEREAS, An interagency workgroup of Task Force members met on a regular basis in order to focus the work of the group and to coordinate the completion of the needs assessment; and

WHEREAS, In light of the completed needs assessment, it is the understanding of the Task Force that in today's rural economy there is no great demand for additional lending mechanisms in order to support start-up needs of resource based industries, and thus the establishment of a finance development authority is not recommended at this time; and

WHEREAS, Although the original charge of the Task Force on Resource Based Industry in Maryland has been accomplished and that task force sunsets as of January 31, 2002, there is still a great need for government attention to several areas that are integral to the continued operation and success of rural industries; and

WHEREAS, In order to maintain resource based industries as the backbone of the rural economy, State effort should now turn to other development concerns such as public education on the Statewide benefits of rural-based industry, better communication between business operators and State agencies, innovation in production techniques and technology transfer, and entrepreneurial training in management and marketing skills; and

WHEREAS, Given the education and perspective that task force members have acquired over the term of the Task Force on Resource Based Industry in Maryland, it is their unanimous recommendation that a new task force be fashioned in order to carry forward the State's support and enhancement of economic growth opportunities for rural industry; and

WHEREAS, It is therefore necessary and appropriate to reconfigure the first