

(c) The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall jointly designate two of the members as cochairs of the Task Force.

(d) The Task Force shall:

(1) establish an interagency workgroup and its specific charge within the operation of the Task Force;

(2) study the current and anticipated needs for grants and loans for specific elements of rural business development, such as niche market development, technology transfer, research and development, and micro-enterprise development for resource based industries;

(3) consider the factors involved in, and investigate the feasibility of, the:

(i) creation of a staff position to act as an information clearinghouse for resource based industries;

(ii) creation or enhancement of a pool of grant funds for resource based innovation and research; and

(iii) sponsorship of education and networking seminars to enhance the quality and quantity of economic development opportunities available to rural businesses;

(4) develop specific recommendations for improving economic development of resource based industries and related innovation, information sharing, technology transfer, coordination, and business education and training;

(5) monitor:

(i) the performance and progress of State agencies in their service of resource based industries; and

(ii) relevant studies of rural-based business, including those conducted by the University of Maryland and Salisbury University; and

(6) report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on or before September 30, 2003.

(e) As necessary and appropriate, the Task Force may appoint ad hoc committees to assist the Task Force in any aspect of the development of resource industry business opportunities and markets.

(f) The Department of Legislative Services, with the assistance of the Forvm for Rural Maryland, shall provide staff for the Task Force.

(g) A member of the Task Force or of an ad hoc committee of the Task Force may not receive compensation for serving on the Task Force or committee, but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.