

CHAPTER 176

(Senate Bill 431)

AN ACT concerning

~~Natural Resources – Forest Conservation Act – No Net Loss of Forest~~ Task Force to Study a No Net Loss of Forest Policy

FOR the purpose of ~~requiring the Department of Natural Resources, on or before a certain date, to conduct a certain assessment, develop certain draft legislation, and submit the draft legislation to the Governor and General Assembly; and generally relating to the Forest Conservation Act~~ requesting that the Governor establish a Task Force to Study a No Net Loss of Forest Policy; requiring the Task Force to develop a certain plan and draft legislation; requiring the Task Force to submit the plan and draft legislation to the Governor and General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the conservation of forested lands in the State.

~~BY~~ adding to

~~Article – Natural Resources~~

~~Section 5 – 1614~~

~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~

~~(2005 Replacement Volume and 2007 Supplement)~~

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That ~~the Laws of Maryland read as follows:~~

~~Article – Natural Resources~~

~~5 – 1614.~~

~~ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2008, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:~~

~~(1) CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF THIS SUBTITLE;~~

~~(2) DEVELOP DRAFT LEGISLATION FOR THE 2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS A PROCESS TO ACHIEVE A NO NET LOSS OF FOREST IN THE STATE BEGINNING IN 2010; AND~~

~~(3) SUBMIT THE DRAFT LEGISLATION DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION TO THE GOVERNOR~~

~~AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.~~

(a) The Governor is requested to establish a Task Force to Study a No Net Loss of Forest Policy to develop:

(1) a specific plan, including programs and other necessary actions, to achieve and maintain a policy of no net loss of forests; and

(2) draft legislation for the 2009 legislative session of the General Assembly to ensure that there is a process to achieve a no net loss of forest in the State beginning in 2010.

(b) The Task Force shall consist of representatives from:

(1) the Department of Natural Resources;

(2) the Department of Agriculture;

(3) the Department of Planning; and

(4) organizations representing:

(i) forest landowners;

(ii) local governments;

(iii) the development community;

(iv) the forest products industry;

(v) the agricultural community;

(vi) the forest conservancy district boards; and

(vii) forest conservation.

(c) The Department of Natural Resources shall provide staff support for the Task Force.

(d) On or before December 1, 2008, the Task Force shall submit the specific plan and draft legislation developed under subsection (a) of this section to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect ~~July~~ June 1, 2008. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of May 31, 2009, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, April 24, 2008.