

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

Article - Agriculture

2-508.

(b) Beginning with fiscal year 1979, and in each fiscal year thereafter, the Foundation shall determine the maximum amount which may be expended for allotted purchases of easements on land located within each county. The maximum amount which may be expended for allotted purchases of easements in any county in any fiscal year shall be:

(1) An amount, to be used for general allotted purchases, equal to one twenty-third of one half of the total amount to be allotted; and

(2) An amount, to be used for matching allotted purchases, which shall be computed for each eligible county by dividing one half of the total amount to be allotted equally among those counties having an approved program. The maximum amount available from the Foundation for the Foundation's share in matching allotted purchases may not exceed [\$1 million] \$2,000,000 in any county in any fiscal year.

2-509.

(b) Regulations and procedures adopted by the Foundation for the establishment and monitoring of agricultural districts shall provide that:

(1) One or more owners of land actively devoted to agricultural use may file a petition with the county governing body requesting the establishment of an agricultural district composed of the land owned by the petitioners. The petition shall include maps and descriptions of the current use of land in the proposed district.

(2) Upon receipt of a petition to establish an agricultural district the local governing body shall refer the petition and accompanying materials both to the agricultural preservation advisory board and to the county planning and zoning body.

(i) Within 60 days of the referral of a petition, the agricultural preservation advisory board shall advise the county governing body as to whether or not the land in the proposed district meets the qualifications established by the Foundation under subsection (c) of this section, and whether or not the advisory board recommends establishment of the district.

(ii) Within 60 days of the referral of a petition, the county planning and zoning body shall advise the local governing body as to whether or not establishment of the district is compatible with existing and approved county plans and overall county policy, and whether or not the planning and zoning body recommends establishment of the district.

(3) If either the agricultural preservation advisory board or the planning and zoning body recommends approval, the county governing body shall hold a public hearing on the petition. Adequate notice of the hearing shall be given to all landowners in the proposed district, and to the Foundation.