

(b) [Assign an order of priority to the application from the volunteer ambulance and rescue departments prior to submission to the county] PREPARE A WRITTEN RECOMMENDATION FOR THE NEED, PRACTICALITY, AND FINANCIAL ABILITY OF A LOAN APPLICANT AND FORWARD THE RECOMMENDATION TO THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE.

(5) THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE SHALL:

(A) EVALUATE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY FIRE BOARD AND THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY AMBULANCE AND RESCUE ASSOCIATION FOR CONTENT AND ASSIGN A PRIORITY BASED ON THE AVAILABILITY OF LOAN FUNDS IN THE FUND, PAST REQUESTS, NEED OF THE RESPECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS, AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS APPLICABLE DURING ITS DELIBERATIONS; AND

(B) FORWARD ALL LOAN APPLICATIONS AND SUBMIT ITS PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

[(5)](6) An officer of the county designated by the Board of County Commissioners shall review loan applications in accordance with the priority assigned by the [St. Mary's County Fire Board and the St. Mary's County Ambulance and Rescue Association] ST. MARY'S COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE.

[(6)](7) Subject to the provisions of Subsections E and F of this section, a loan may be approved by the County Commissioners up to the amount requested BY A LOAN APPLICANT if sufficient moneys exist in the [fund] FUND.

J. Any and all interest income derived from loans from the [fund] FUND are exempt from state, county, or other taxation of every kind and nature in the state.

K. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the county may finance the purchase of fire fighting equipment and land acquisition and construction costs for the benefit of volunteer fire, ambulance and rescue departments that are members in good standing of the St. Mary's County Fire Board or the St. Mary's County ambulance and Rescue Association by any means which the Board of County Commissioners determines to be reasonable and appropriate to accomplish the purposes of this section, including, without limitation, lease purchase agreements or other alternative financing arrangements. Applications for financing under this subsection shall be made and processed in the same manner and upon the same conditions prescribed by this section for loans from the [fund] FUND. The acquisition of equipment or other property pursuant to this subsection shall not be subject to any procurement or similar procedures that would otherwise be applicable.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2001.

Approved April 10, 2001.