

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2001 SESSION

## CHAPTER 521

*An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 3.1 a chapter numbered 3.3, consisting of sections numbered 3.1-18.9 through 3.1-18.12, relating to the Office of Farmland Preservation.*

[S 1160]

Approved March 23, 2001

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 3.1 a chapter numbered 3.3, consisting of sections numbered 3.1-18.9 through 3.1-18.12, as follows:**

### *CHAPTER 3.3.*

#### *OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION.*

*§ 3.1-18.9. Agricultural Vitality Program continued as Office of Farmland Preservation.*

*The Agricultural Vitality Program within the Department is continued and hereafter shall be known as the Office of Farmland Preservation.*

*§ 3.1-18.10. Powers and duties of Office of Farmland Preservation.*

*The Office of Farmland Preservation shall have the following powers and duties:*

*1. To develop, in cooperation with the Department of Business Assistance, the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, the American Farmland Trust, the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the Virginia Association of Counties, and the Virginia Cooperative Extension, (i) model policies and practices that may be used as a guide to establish local purchase of development rights programs; (ii) criteria for the certification of local purchase of development rights programs as eligible to receive grants, loans or other funds from public sources; and (iii) methods and sources of revenue for allocating funds to localities to purchase agricultural conservation easements;*

*2. To create programs to educate the public about the importance of farmland preservation to the quality of life in the Commonwealth;*

*3. To provide technical, professional, and other assistance to farmers on matters related to farmland preservation; and*

*4. To administer the Virginia Farm Link program established pursuant to § 3.1-18.11.*

*§ 3.1-18.11. Virginia Farm Link program.*

*There is hereby created the Virginia Farm Link program to provide assistance to retiring farmers and individuals seeking to become active farmers in the transition of farm businesses and properties from retiring farmers to active farmers. Such assistance shall include, but not be limited to, (i) assistance in the preparation of business plans for the transition of business interests; (ii) assistance in the facilitation of transfers of existing properties and agricultural operations to interested buyers; (iii) information on innovative farming methods and techniques; and (iv) research assistance on agricultural, financial, marketing, and other matters.*

*§ 3.1-18.12. Reporting requirements.*

*The Commissioner shall submit a written report on the operation of the Office of Farmland Preservation by December 1 of each year to the chairmen of the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources. The provisions of this chapter shall not preclude local purchase of development rights programs established pursuant to Chapter 17 (§ 10.1-1700 et seq.) of Title 10.1 from being eligible to receive grants, loans, or other funds from public sources.*