

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend and reenact § 3.2-201 of the Code of Virginia, relating to farmland preservation policies and programs.

[H 2565]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 3.2-201 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 3.2-201. Powers and duties of Office of Farmland Preservation.

A. 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 provide technical, professional, and other assistance to local governments interested in developing additional farmland preservation policies and programs. Such policies and programs shall include (i) use value assessment and taxation pursuant to §§ 58.1-3230 and 58.1-3231; (ii) transfer of development rights pursuant to Article 7.1 (§ 15.2-2316.1 et seq.) of Chapter 22 of Title 15.2; (iii) agricultural and forestal districts pursuant to Chapter 43 (§ 15.2-4300 et seq.) of Title 15.2; and (iv) establishment of local lease of development rights; and*

5. To administer the Virginia Farm Link program established pursuant to § 3.2-202.

B. State grants shall be distributed to local purchase of development rights programs under policies, procedures, and guidelines developed by the Office of Farmland Preservation. In general, for each \$1 in grant moneys awarded by the Office, the applicable local purchase of development rights program of the county or city shall be required to provide a \$1 match. However, as part of these policies, procedures, and guidelines developed by the Office, the Office shall include incentives that recognize and encourage counties and cities participating in use value taxation pursuant to Article 4 (§ 58.1-3229 et seq.) of Chapter 32 of Title 58.1.

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