

Chapter 479

(House Bill 289)

AN ACT concerning

Maryland Forestry Education Fund – Establishment

FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Forestry Education Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund to expand and enhance the Maryland Forestry Foundation's capacity to provide certain education and resources to forest landowners, the ability of district forestry boards and the knowledge of local governments to achieve healthy and sustainable forests, and the ability of businesses to test innovative best management practices in forestry; requiring interest earnings of the Fund to be credited to the Fund; and generally relating to the Maryland Forestry Education Fund.

BY adding to

Article – Natural Resources

Section 5–2001 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 20. Maryland Forestry Education Fund”

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2018 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – State Finance and Procurement

Section 6–226(a)(2)(i)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – State Finance and Procurement

Section 6–226(a)(2)(ii)170. and 171.

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – State Finance and Procurement

Section 6–226(a)(2)(ii)172.

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

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

Article – Natural Resources

SUBTITLE 20. MARYLAND FORESTRY EDUCATION FUND.

5-2001.

(A) IN THIS SECTION, “FUND” MEANS THE MARYLAND FORESTRY EDUCATION FUND.

(B) THERE IS A MARYLAND FORESTRY EDUCATION FUND.

(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO EXPAND AND ENHANCE:

(1) THE MARYLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION’S CAPACITY TO PROVIDE EDUCATION AND RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT MARYLAND’S FOREST LANDOWNERS;

(2) THE ABILITY OF DISTRICT FORESTRY BOARDS AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN MARYLAND TO ACHIEVE:

(I) ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF FOREST HEALTH; AND

(II) THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FOREST RESOURCES;
AND

(3) THE ABILITY OF BUSINESSES TO TEST INNOVATIVE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN FORESTRY.

(D) THE MARYLAND FORESTRY FOUNDATION SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.

(E) (1) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.

(2) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND SEPARATELY, AND THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.

(F) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:

(1) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE FUND;

(2) INTEREST EARNINGS; AND

(3) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ACCEPTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.

(G) THE FUND MAY BE USED ONLY FOR:

(1) PROVIDING TRAINING AND EDUCATION TO FOREST LANDOWNERS, DISTRICT FORESTRY BOARDS, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE THE LANDOWNERS, BOARDS, AND GOVERNMENTS ARE WELL INFORMED ON ADVANCES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN:

(I) HEALTHY FOREST MANAGEMENT;

(II) ECOLOGICAL SERVICE MARKETS;

(III) EMERGING FORESTRY THREATS;

(IV) CLIMATE SCIENCE;

(V) FOREST CONSERVATION;

(VI) URBAN FORESTRY;

(VII) SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE;

(VIII) FORESTRY POLICY;

(IX) FORESTRY PRACTICES; AND

(X) RESOURCE OPTIONS THAT PROMOTE THE MULTIPLE BENEFITS OF FOREST MANAGEMENT;

(2) PROVIDING OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT THAT BUILDS LOCAL CAPACITY AND INSTITUTIONALIZES SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS WITHIN COMMUNITIES AND THE DISTRICT FORESTRY BOARDS, INCLUDING:

(I) HOLDING A FOREST SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE ONCE EVERY 2 YEARS;

(II) IMPLEMENTING A PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING EXCHANGE;
AND

(III) PROVIDING HEALTHY FOREST PRESENTATIONS;

(3) DEVELOPING AND EXPANDING A HEALTHY FOREST EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION PROGRAM;

(4) IMPROVING THE OUTREACH OF DISTRICT FORESTRY BOARDS BY PROVIDING EDUCATION, RECOGNITION, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS THE BOARDS CAN IMPLEMENT;

(5) PROVIDING SMALL GRANTS TO DISTRICT FORESTRY BOARDS, FOREST LANDOWNERS, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, AND BUSINESSES TO TEST INNOVATIVE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN FORESTRY;

(6) RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS FOREST LANDOWNERS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS MAKE TOWARD ACHIEVING HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT; AND

(7) EXPENSES RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND.

(H) (1) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL INVEST THE MONEY OF THE FUND IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE INVESTED.

(2) ANY INTEREST EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE CREDITED TO THE FUND.

(I) EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND MAY BE MADE ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE BUDGET.

(J) MONEY EXPENDED FROM THE FUND FOR THE OUTREACH, TRAINING, EDUCATION, AND GRANTS UNDER SUBSECTION (G) OF THIS SECTION IS SUPPLEMENTAL TO AND IS NOT INTENDED TO TAKE THE PLACE OF FUNDING THAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE APPROPRIATED FOR FORESTRY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.

(K) FOR FISCAL ~~YEAR~~ YEARS 2025 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER 2026, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$250,000 TO THE FUND.

Article – State Finance and Procurement

6–226.

(a) (2) (i) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and unless inconsistent with a federal law, grant agreement, or other federal requirement or with the terms of a gift or settlement agreement, net interest on all State money allocated by the State Treasurer under this section to special funds or accounts, and otherwise entitled to receive interest earnings, as accounted for by the Comptroller, shall accrue to the General Fund of the State.

(ii) The provisions of subparagraph (i) of this paragraph do not apply to the following funds:

170. the Cannabis Public Health Fund; [and]

171. the Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund; **AND**

172. THE MARYLAND FORESTRY EDUCATION FUND.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2023.

Approved by the Governor, May 8, 2023.