

SENATE BILL 34

M4

3lr0991

(PRE-FILED)

By: **Senator Hester**

Requested: November 20, 2022

Introduced and read first time: January 11, 2023

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Department of Agriculture – State Ombudsman for Value-Added Agriculture**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the State Ombudsman for Value-Added Agriculture as a
4 position in the Department of Agriculture; and generally relating to the State
5 Ombudsman for Value-Added Agriculture.

6 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

7 Article – Agriculture

8 Section 2-106

9 Annotated Code of Maryland

10 (2016 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

11 BY adding to

12 Article – Agriculture

13 Section 2-2201 and 2-2202 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 22. State
14 Ombudsman for Value-Added Agriculture”

15 Annotated Code of Maryland

16 (2016 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

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

19 **Article – Agriculture**

20 2-106.

21 (a) The following positions and units are included within the Department:

22 (1) The Maryland Agricultural Fair Board;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



- 1 (2) The Chief of Weights and Measures;
- 2 (3) The State Chemist;
- 3 (4) The State Veterinarian;
- 4 (5) The State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners;
- 5 (6) The State Soil Conservation Committee;
- 6 (7) The Maryland Agricultural Commission;
- 7 (8) The Maryland Horse Industry Board;
- 8 (9) The Maryland Winery and Grape Growers' Advisory Board; [and]
- 9 (10) The Seafood Marketing Advisory Commission; AND
- 10 (11) **THE STATE OMBUDSMAN FOR VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE.**

11 (b) The Secretary shall appoint the State Chemist, State Veterinarian, **STATE**
12 **OMBUDSMAN FOR VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE**, and Chief of Weights and Measures.

13 (c) The Department also includes any other position or unit which is declared
14 within the Department pursuant to law.

15 **SUBTITLE 22. STATE OMBUDSMAN FOR VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE.**

16 **2-2201.**

17 **IN THIS SUBTITLE, "VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE":**

18 **(1) MEANS THE ALTERATION OF A RAW AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT IN**
19 **A WAY THAT INCREASES THE PRODUCT'S WORTH TO A CONSUMER AND BRINGS MORE**
20 **REVENUE TO A FARMER, PRODUCER, OR PROCESSOR; AND**

21 **(2) INCLUDES ALL ENTERPRISES IN WHICH AN AGRICULTURAL**
22 **BUSINESS OR THE AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS'S PRODUCTS ARE ALTERED,**
23 **MARKETED, PRODUCED, OR PROCESSED IN A WAY THAT ADDS INCOME TO A FARMER,**
24 **PRODUCER, OR PROCESSOR.**

25 **2-2202.**

26 **(A) THE STATE OMBUDSMAN FOR VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE SHALL:**

1 **(1) SERVE AS THE PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT FOR INDIVIDUALS**
2 **ENGAGING IN, OR INTERESTED IN ENGAGING IN, VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE IN**
3 **THE STATE;**

4 **(2) PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING STATE AND FEDERAL**
5 **REGULATIONS RELATING TO VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE;**

6 **(3) ACT AS A LIAISON BETWEEN STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERS**
7 **INVOLVED IN VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE; AND**

8 **(4) PERFORM ANY OTHER DUTY OR FUNCTION THAT SUPPORTS**
9 **VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE, AS REQUIRED BY THE SECRETARY.**

10 **(B) THE STATE OMBUDSMAN FOR VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE SHALL**
11 **RECEIVE A SALARY AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.**

12 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That a Position Identification
13 Number (PIN) shall be created in the Department of Agriculture for the State Ombudsman
14 for Value-Added Agriculture.

15 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, during the first year after
16 the initial appointment of the State Ombudsman for Value-Added Agriculture, the priority
17 function of the Ombudsman is to focus on implementing the recommendations of the Task
18 Force to Study the Feasibility of Return to State Meat Process Inspection.

19 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
20 October 1, 2023.