

Agriculture and Forestry

Proposed amendments for the Agriculture and Forestry secretariat include reductions of \$9.1 million GF from the budget approved in 2008. These reductions result in a total GF appropriation of \$93.9 million for the Secretariat, which represents an 8.9 percent GF decrease when compared to Chapter 879 of the 2008 Session.

Proposed general fund reductions for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services total \$4.9 million and the elimination of 19.0 FTE positions, including four layoffs. Recommended general fund reductions for the Department of Forestry total \$4.2 million and the elimination of 23 positions, including five layoffs.

- **Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

- *Eliminate Positions Throughout the Agency.* Proposes eliminating 12.0 FTE positions throughout the agency, including dairy services, marketing, veterinarian services, consumer protection and animal and food industry services. Combined savings from position eliminations total about \$300,000 GF in the first year and \$900,000 GF in the second year.
- *Eliminate Positions in the Division of Charitable Gaming.* Proposes reducing funding for the regulation of charitable gaming by \$390,000 GF the first year and \$500,000 GF the second year and eliminating a total of seven out of 30 positions in the Division.
- *Purchase of Development Rights Matching Grants.* Reduces funding by \$500,000 GF the second year for the purchase of development rights matching grants program, which is administered by the Office of Farmland Preservation. This action will leave \$500,000 GF each year for the program.
- *Increase Fee for Animal Diagnostic Laboratory Services.* Proposes increasing fees charged to farmers for diagnostic services for animals, resulting in savings of \$185,906 GF the first year and \$200,138 GF the second year. The budget document indicates that the fee increases are also designed to discourage farmers from bringing their animals and samples in for testing.
- *Hydrilla Funding.* Proposed eliminating \$150,000 GF in the second year that had been approved by the 2008 General Assembly to support efforts to eradicate hydrilla on Lake Gaston, Smith Mountain Lake, Lake Anna and the Potomac River.
- *Eliminate Grants for Specialty Crop Research.* Eliminates \$100,000 GF each year for funding to Virginia's land grant universities for specialty crop research.

- *Reduce Funding for Wine Distribution Corporation.* Reduces funding by 35 percent for the wine distribution corporation, resulting in savings of \$100,000 GF each year.
- *Transfer Cash Balances to the General Fund.* Proposes transferring nongeneral fund cash balances totaling \$1.8 million from prepaid legal services, pesticide applicator licensees, charitable solicitation registrations and fertilizer inspection fees to the general fund in the first year.
- **Department of Forestry**
 - *Turnover and Vacancy Savings/Eliminate Vacant Positions.* Captures savings created by turnover and vacancies of \$447,495 GF in the first year. In the second year, proposes savings of \$996,719 GF by eliminating 19.0 vacant FTE positions throughout the agency.
 - *Consolidate Regional Offices.* Proposes consolidating six regional offices into three, with the remaining offices being located in Tappahannock, Charlottesville and Salem. This strategy results in savings of \$232,404 GF the first year and \$357,896 GF the second year and the elimination of 3.0 FTE positions, including one layoff.
 - *Increase Fee to Cover Cost of Reforestation of Timberland Programs.* Reduces the amounts provided to match industry funds for the reforestation of timberlands by \$120,000 GF each year. The reduction is proposed to be offset by increasing the fee charged to landowners from \$2 to \$4 per forest acre that is harvested.
 - *Defer Heavy Equipment Purchases.* Proposes reducing funding for replacement of heavy equipment by \$140,769 GF in the first year.
 - *Eliminate Use of State Vehicles by Fire Fighters for Commuting.* The agency's 140 first responders will no longer be allowed to use state vehicles for commuting, except when authorized during fire season or during times of high fire danger resulting in savings of \$60,000 GF the first year and \$120,000 GF the second year.