

**§ 106-1011. Statement of purpose.**

- (a) The General Assembly finds that:
- (1) It is in the public interest of the State to encourage the development of the State's forest resources and the protection and improvement of the forest environment.
  - (2) Unfavorable environmental impacts, particularly the rapid loss of forest land to urban development, are occurring as a result of population growth. It is in the State's interest that corrective action be developed now to offset forest land losses in the future.
  - (3) Regeneration of potentially productive forest land is a high-priority problem requiring prompt attention and action. Private forest land will become more important to meet the needs of the State's population.
  - (4) Growing demands on forests and related land resources cannot be met by intensive management of public and industrial forest lands alone.
- (b) The purpose of this Article is to direct the Commissioner of Agriculture to implement a forest development program to:
- (1) Provide financial assistance to eligible landowners to increase the productivity of the privately owned forests of the State through the application of forest renewal practices and other practices that improve tree growth and overall forest health.
  - (2) Insure that forest operations in the State are conducted in a manner designed to protect the soil, air, and water resources, including but not limited to streams, lakes and estuaries through actions of landowners on lands for which assistance is sought under provisions in this Article.
  - (3) Implement a program of voluntary landowner participation through the use of a forest development fund to meet the above goals.
- (c) It is the intent of the General Assembly that in implementing the program under this Article, the Commissioner will cause it to be coordinated with other related programs in such a manner as to encourage the utilization of private agencies, firms and individuals furnishing services and materials needed in the application of practices included in the forest development program. (1977, c. 562, s. 2; c. 771, s. 4; 1989, c. 727, s. 218(73); 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1004, s. 19(b); 1997-443, s. 11A.119(a); 2005-126, s. 1; 2011-145, s. 13.25(gg), (hh).)