

Chapter 436

(Senate Bill 34)

AN ACT concerning

**Department of Agriculture – State ~~Ombudsman~~ Specialist for Value-Added
Agriculture**

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

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Agriculture
Section 2-106
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2016 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

BY adding to
Article – Agriculture
Section 2-2201 and 2-2202 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 22. State
~~Ombudsman~~ Specialist for Value-Added Agriculture”
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2016 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 – Agriculture

2-106.

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

- (1) The Maryland Agricultural Fair Board;
- (2) The Chief of Weights and Measures;
- (3) The State Chemist;
- (4) The State Veterinarian;
- (5) The State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners;
- (6) The State Soil Conservation Committee;

- (7) The Maryland Agricultural Commission;
- (8) The Maryland Horse Industry Board;
- (9) The Maryland Winery and Grape Growers' Advisory Board; [and]
- (10) The Seafood Marketing Advisory Commission; AND

(11) THE STATE ~~OMBUDSMAN~~ SPECIALIST FOR VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE.

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

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

SUBTITLE 22. STATE ~~OMBUDSMAN~~ SPECIALIST FOR VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE.

2-2201.

IN THIS SUBTITLE, "VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE":

(1) MEANS THE ALTERATION OR ENHANCEMENT OF A RAW AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT, INCLUDING LIVESTOCK, OR AN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE IN A WAY THAT INCREASES THE ~~PRODUCT'S~~ PRODUCT OR SERVICE'S WORTH TO A CONSUMER AND BRINGS MORE REVENUE TO A FARMER, PRODUCER, OR PROCESSOR; AND

(2) INCLUDES ALL ENTERPRISES, INCLUDING THOSE PROVIDING EQUINE ACTIVITIES, IN WHICH AN AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS OR THE AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS'S PRODUCTS OR SERVICES ARE ALTERED, MARKETED, PRODUCED, OR PROCESSED IN A WAY THAT ADDS INCOME TO A FARMER, PRODUCER, OR PROCESSOR.

2-2202.

(A) THE STATE ~~OMBUDSMAN~~ SPECIALIST FOR VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE SHALL:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Approved by the Governor, May 8, 2023.