

No. 2004-231

AN ACT

HB 2775

Establishing the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education Program; providing for the issuance of grants and for the powers and duties of the Department of Education.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education Program Act.

Section 2. Legislative findings and intent.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds as follows:

(1) The Chesapeake Bay is America’s largest and most biologically diverse estuary, and the bay and its tributaries have been important to our economy, traditions and culture.

(2) In 1983 the Commonwealth along with the States of Maryland and Virginia, the District of Columbia and the Environmental Protection Agency entered into the first Chesapeake Bay Agreement in an effort to protect and restore the bay’s ecosystem.

(3) In 2002 the Commonwealth renewed its commitment and entered into a new agreement entitled Chesapeake 2002, which recognizes that the condition of the bay is dependent upon the actions of every citizen who resides in the watershed.

(4) The Chesapeake 2002 agreement commits the Commonwealth to make watershed education and outreach a priority.

(b) Intent.—It is the intent of the General Assembly to develop policies that work to improve the bay’s ecosystem and accomplish the goals of Chesapeake 2002, which include expanding watershed education school curricula and providing students with opportunities to directly participate in meaningful bay or stream outdoor experiences.

Section 3. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Department.” The Department of Education of the Commonwealth.

“Program.” The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education Program.

“School.” A public or nonpublic school and an environmental education center located within this Commonwealth.

Section 4. Establishment of program.

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education Program is established within the department to provide grants to schools to promote the teaching of

watershed education and afford students the opportunity to participate in meaningful bay or stream outdoor experiences.

**Section 5. Program requirements.**

An eligible school shall apply for a grant under this program as prescribed by the department. The application shall, at a minimum, contain the following:

- (1) A description of the school's watershed education program.
- (2) A description of the outdoor watershed experiences that the school offers or intends to offer for students.
- (3) A description of how the grant funds will be utilized.
- (4) A summary of the educational benefits accruing to students as a result of the program.
- (5) The number of students participating in the school's program and the grade level of participating students.

**Section 6. Powers and duties of department.**

The department shall:

- (1) Administer the program and develop an application procedure for awarding grants under the program.
- (2) Beginning in 2005, submit a report by December 31 of each year to the chairman and minority chairman of the Education Committee of the Senate and the chairman and minority chairman of the Education Committee of the House of Representatives that includes a list of the schools receiving grant awards under the program and the dollar amount of each award.
- (3) Allocate grants under the program to eligible schools from funds appropriated for this purpose, provided that no grant may exceed \$5,000.
- (4) Utilize not more than 20% of the funds appropriated for the program for program administration.
- (5) Evaluate and distribute curriculum materials which schools may utilize for the program.
- (6) Provide professional development workshops through State agencies and nonprofit organizations for watershed education for teachers.

**Section 7. Funding.**

Funding for the program shall be dependent on annual appropriations made by the General Assembly.

**Section 8. Effective date.**

This act shall take effect immediately.

APPROVED—The 1st day of December, A.D. 2004.

EDWARD G. RENDELL