

Agriculture and Forestry

The Governor's proposed amendments for the Agriculture and Forestry secretariat include \$184,589 in additional general fund dollars. When compared to current legislative appropriations, these additional amounts would result in a total general fund appropriation of \$96.6 million.

The largest spending item is \$377,251. The Departments of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Forestry are upgrading communication links and database systems. Other spending of \$180,070 provides more general fund support for new positions in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The largest savings item is a reduction of \$372,732 in general fund support for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The reduction is a technical adjustment to the Department's base budget.

- **Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**
 - *Regional Animal Health Laboratories.* Proposes \$73,986 GF in the first year and \$58,265 GF in the second year to upgrade the communication links between the labs and central office. Failure to complete the upgrade jeopardizes the laboratory information management system (LIMS) which collects \$900,000 in revenue annually.
 - *Grain Marketing Services.* Proposes \$111,040 GF in the second year to increase inspection and certification services of Virginia grains and soybeans. The dollar value of grain exported out of Virginia in the past year is \$200 million.
 - *Animal Care Veterinarian.* Proposes \$69,030 GF in FY 2008 and one position to coordinate evacuation and transportation of pets and service animals during natural disasters and emergencies. This action is required under the federal Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006, which requires state and local governments in their emergency preparedness operational plans to address the needs of individuals with pets.
 - *Land Conservation.* Budget language proposed in the Appropriations Act for the Department of Conservation and Recreation directs the agency to transfer \$5.0 million GF in FY 2007 to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The money would establish a state fund to match local government purchases of development rights for the preservation of working farms and forests.
- **Department of Forestry**
 - *Integrated Forest Information Resources System.* Proposes \$245,000 GF in FY 2008 to complete Phase 2 and begin Phase 3 of the development of a new information technology system. The new system is designed to increase the department's productivity in efforts to predict, fight and control wildfires as well as inspect tree harvest operations and better manage its databases.