



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

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One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on SB 567

Property Tax - Agricultural Use Assessment – Improvements – **FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted service programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them.

MHC supports SB 567 because horse farms constitute 25 percent of Maryland’s agricultural lands (705,000 acres), an amount equal to 10 percent of all land in Maryland. Horse farms are the backbone of the horse industry, which has a \$2.4 billion impact on Maryland in 2022 dollars and are significant contributors to the state’s tax base.

In addition, the range of equine activities that qualify as agriculture under Maryland law is large and covers more than just breeding. “Equine activities shall be treated as agricultural activities for the purposes of this subtitle.” Ag. Article § 2-701(d). Equine activities include “teaching equestrian skills, participating in equestrian competitions, exhibitions or other displays of equestrian skills, and caring for, breeding, boarding, renting, riding, or training horses.” Id.

Permitting the infrastructure needed for the full range of agricultural equine activities to be assessed as commercial as opposed to agricultural would drive many horse operations out of business.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 567.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
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