



February 28, 2024

**Senate Bill 565**

**Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

**Position: UNFAVORABLE**

This legislation would, subject to voter referendum, pave the way for the General Assembly to authorize the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission (SLGCC) to license video lottery operators to conduct and operate Internet gaming in the State. The authorization of Internet gaming would have significant and detrimental economic impacts on Anne Arundel County communities.

Anne Arundel County has had a meaningful and successful partnership with Live! Casino since it opened in 2012. In addition to the generation of revenue that provides critical funding for fire and public safety services, recreation and parks, education and libraries, transportation systems, and other community services and projects, Live! employs over 2,200 individuals. Live! has also invested over \$250 million in a hotel and event center, which opened in 2018. During the pandemic, Live! partnered with the Anne Arundel County Health Department to operate a COVID vaccination clinic in the casino's convention space.

Like the other five Maryland counties with state-licensed casinos, Anne Arundel County receives a portion of revenues derived from table gaming and video lottery terminals in the form of local impact grants. Anne Arundel County receives 5% of table gaming revenues associated with Live! Casino, and a portion of video lottery terminal (VLT) revenues associated with the three casinos in the central Maryland area. A Local Development Council guides spending of the revenue from VLTs, which is spent on programs and services located in a 3-mile radius surrounding the casino. Permitted uses include infrastructure improvements, facilities, public safety, sanitation, economic and community development, and other public services and improvements.

We anticipate that, once implemented, Internet gaming will impact local jobs, the local economy, and local revenues associated with in-person table gaming and VLTs. Internet gaming will transfer revenue from the economic engine that benefits our residents to online platforms that do not. For this reason, Anne Arundel County opposes the authorization of Internet gaming.