

Appropriations Committee Testimony.pdf

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Tuesday, February 25, 2025

Dear Chairman Barnes, Chairwoman Atterbeary, and Committee Members

I am writing on behalf of the Cloverleaf Standardbred Owners Association, representing approximately 450 Maryland horsewomen and men involved in the standardbred racing industry, including breeders, owners, trainers, drivers, grooms, and other industry participants.

We have serious concerns about the proposed reduction of the Purse Dedication Account (PDA) from 6% to 5%. This seemingly minor 1% reduction would have significant cascading effects on the Maryland Standardbred Breeders Fund, resulting in a 16% decrease in funding. This fund is crucial for supporting horses sired or foaled in Maryland, and any cuts would disproportionately impact the small-scale breeding operations that make up roughly 50% of Maryland's breeders. Additionally, Winbak Farms of Cecil County, MD, the largest Standardbred breeder in North America, would be adversely affected. In 2024 alone, Winbak bred horses earned over \$20 million and won over 900 races worldwide, demonstrating their significant contribution to the industry.

Furthermore, the proposed PDA reduction would lead to over a 16% decrease in overnight purse accounts for Ocean Downs and Rosecroft Raceway. These accounts primarily benefit Maryland residents and those with Maryland connections, as over 80% of the overnight purse account is paid to them. Of the 12,000 horses racing annually in Maryland, approximately 9,700 are Maryland Owned, Sired, and Bred, highlighting the importance of these accounts for the local industry.

The Maryland Standardbred racing industry has already faced substantial purse fund reductions due to the introduction of various alternative gambling options within the state. The current 6% direct contribution to the Purse Dedication Account has been essential in maintaining the industry's viability, despite operating on a very narrow profit margin. A further 16.67% reduction in the Purse Dedication Account would undoubtedly deliver a devastating blow to an industry deeply rooted in Maryland's history, spanning over 250 years.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gina Maybee". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Gina Maybee
Executive Vice President



TRAINER



OWNER

MARYLAND'S STANDARDBRED HARNESS RACING INDUSTRY IMPACT ON MARYLAND'S WORKFORCE



ASSISTANT
TRAINER

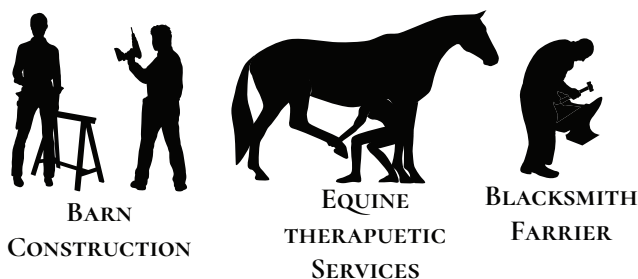
VETERINARIAN

GROOM



BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS
LAWYERS / ACCOUNTANTS
& INSURANCE

OWNER'S ENABLING
BUSINESS EMPLOYEES



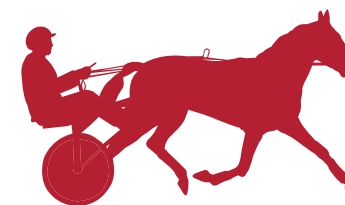
BARN
CONSTRUCTION

EQUINE
THERAPUTIC
SERVICES

BLACKSMITH
FARRIER



BREEDER



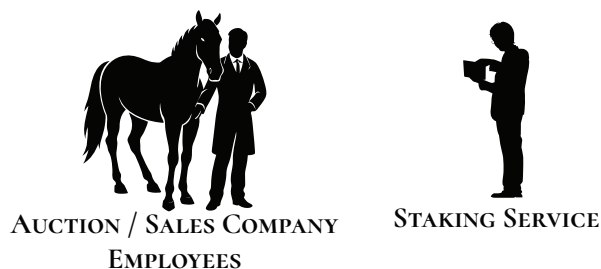
DRIVER



EQUINE
TRANSPORT

FEED & BEDDING
DEALER

TACK &
EQUIPMENT
DEALER



AUCTION / SALES COMPANY
EMPLOYEES

STAKING SERVICE



RACE BIKE MANUFACTURERS
EMPLOYEES

DRIVER APPAREL &
EQUIPMENT EMPLOYEES



BREEDING FARM EMPLOYEES

PDA Reduction Opposition Letter 02-25-25 - Approp.

Uploaded by: Lisa Watts

Position: UNF

February 25, 2025



Dear Honorable Appropriations Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed reduction of the VLT percentage to the Purse Dedication Account from 6% to 5%. This reduction would have significant negative consequences for horse racing, Maryland's economy, tourism, agriculture and open space.

The funding allocated to the Purse Dedication Account supports critical initiatives that reinforce and contribute to the infrastructure of Maryland Racing. A reduction of even 1% would undermine the industry's stability and impact all of the progress, programs, and services derived from racing operations.

For instance, Rosecroft Raceway provides the majority of the racing opportunities for the Standardbred Industry in the State of Maryland. Standardbred racing is the purpose and the economic anchor of the business. The Purse Dedication Funding solidifies the ability to provide racing opportunities sustaining the business which in turn provides significant support to the community. Below please find just a few of the ways that Rosecroft has fostered community relationships:

- **US Capitol Police** – K9 Training Space
- **Prince Georges' County Public Schools** – Back to School Supplies Donations
- **Prince Georges' County Public Schools** – parking lot for Bus Safety Program
- **St. Ignatius Parish** – 20 year relationship
- **Area Civic Association** – provide free meeting space
- **Silver Gloves Boxing Amateur Youth Boxing Tournament**
- **Support of Local Amateur Youth Boxing Committee**
- **Golden Gloves Amateur Boxing Tournament**
- **Community Day** – provide outdoor space
- **Various Food & Clothing Drives**
- **Pepco** – Emergency Storm Location
- **WSSC** – Emergency Location

A decrease in funding would not only limit resources but also place additional burdens on already strained systems, affecting the well-being and economic stability of our community.

I urge you to reconsider this funding reduction and advocate for maintaining or increasing the current VLT percentage allocation to the Purse Dedication Account. Investing in horse racing is an investment in the prosperity and welfare of our constituents, ensuring continued progress and sustainability.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to serving the best interests of our community. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you require further information or wish to discuss this issue in more detail.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Watts
General Manager / Director of Operations
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