

Friday, January 23, 2026

HB 225

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair of the Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser
Vice Chair of the Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 225 - Maryland Horse Industry Board - Sunset Extension

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Kaiser and members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to you as a Board Member of the Maryland Horse Industry Board in support of HB 225 – Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) – Sunset Extension and the important work of they do for the Maryland Horse Industry in support of the Maryland Horse Industry but also to protect both horses and horse enthusiasts alike who participate in equestrian sports and activities in Maryland.

The Maryland Horse Industry Board provides an established, accountable structure for coordinating animal health and welfare, education, workforce development, equine-related economic activity statewide and is the licensing body for Maryland Licensed Stables ensuring stables open to the public for equine activities meet a minimum standard for equine welfare and public safety.

HB 225 provides animal health and welfare infrastructure support for Maryland's horse as well as supports stability and long-term planning for Maryland's \$2.9 billion horse industry, which sustains jobs, preserves open space, and contributes to the State's tourism, recreations and agricultural economies.

Allowing the Board to sunset would eliminate an effective mechanism for managing equine welfare, public safety, existing resources and create operational disruption, and risk inefficiencies or higher costs if similar functions must later be reestablished.

As a lifelong equestrian, competitor and international equestrian event manager, I understand fully the value of the equine industry to not only to economic development in Maryland, but also to environment, land and green space preservation, the continued agricultural services industry as well as sports, recreation, health & wellness and tourism industries. Extending the Board aligns with sound governance practices by maintaining oversight, transparency, and continuity while remaining subject to future evaluation under State law at a critical time while Maryland endeavors to invest in and strengthen the racing industry for the State.

Thank you for your attention to HB 225, I fully support it and respectfully request your support of HR 225 as well.

Sincerely,

Connie Sawyer

President

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Equestrian Sports Production & Marketing

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