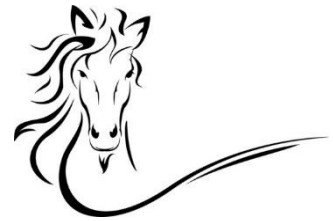


January 23, 2026



Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I write in strong support of **HB 225 – Maryland Horse Industry Board Sunset Extension**, legislation that responsibly extends the statutory authority of the Maryland Horse Industry Board through **July 1, 2036**, in accordance with the Maryland Program Evaluation Act.

HB 225 is a straightforward governance measure. It does **not** create new programs, expand powers, or require additional appropriations, and it carries **no additional fiscal impact** to the State. Rather, it ensures continuity of an established and accountable Board that has effectively served Maryland's horse industry for decades.

Passage of HB 225 preserves the Board's authority to administer and steward **dedicated industry funds**, including competitive grant programs that reinvest directly into Maryland's horse industry. These funds support education, workforce development, animal health and welfare initiatives, and equine-related economic activity across the State. The Board also serves as the **licensing body for Maryland Licensed Stable stables**, providing regulatory consistency and oversight critical to industry operations.

Allowing the Maryland Horse Industry Board to sunset would eliminate a proven mechanism for managing existing resources, create unnecessary operational disruption, and risk inefficiencies or higher costs should similar functions need to be reestablished in the future. In contrast, extending the Board promotes stability, accountability, and continuity while remaining subject to future evaluation under State law.

Maryland's horse industry represents an estimated **\$2.9 billion economic impact**, sustaining jobs, preserving open space, and contributing significantly to the State's agricultural and tourism economies. HB 225 supports the long-term planning necessary to maintain these benefits and sends a clear signal to industry participants and stakeholders that the State remains committed to the horse industry's future.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a **favorable report on HB 225**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Lisa M. Watts*

Rosecroft Raceway, General Manager  
MHIB, Standardbred Representative