

HOUSE BILL 1598

C6

6lr3640
CF SB 762

By: **Delegates McCaskill and Toles**

Introduced and read first time: February 16, 2026

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Horse Racing – Racetrack Facility Renewal Account Grants – Alterations**

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing, rather than requiring, a certain racing licensee to receive
4 a grant for a capital construction plan from the Racetrack Facility Renewal Account
5 without providing and expending a matching fund; requiring the racing licensee that
6 receives the grant without providing and expending a matching fund to conduct live
7 racing in the State for a certain number of years; requiring the State Racing
8 Commission to recapture certain grant funds under certain circumstances and in a
9 certain manner; and generally relating to grants from the Racetrack Facility
10 Renewal Account.

11 BY renumbering

12 Article – State Government
13 Section 9–1A–01(w–1) and (w–2)
14 to be Section 9–1A–01(w–2) and (w–3), respectively
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

18 Article – State Government
19 Section 9–1A–01(a) and 9–1A–29(a)
20 Annotated Code of Maryland
21 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

22 BY adding to

23 Article – State Government
24 Section 9–1A–01(w–1)
25 Annotated Code of Maryland
26 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

27 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Article – State Government
 2 Section 9–1A–09, 9–1A–28(h)(1), and 9–1A–29(b)(6), (c), (e), (f), and (h)
 3 Annotated Code of Maryland
 4 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

5 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 6 That Section(s) 9–1A–01(w–1) and (w–2) of Article – State Government of the Annotated
 7 Code of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 9–1A–01(w–2) and (w–3), respectively.

8 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
 9 as follows:

10 **Article – State Government**

11 9–1A–01.

12 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

13 **(w–1) “RACING LICENSEE” MEANS THE HOLDER OF A LICENSE ISSUED BY THE**
 14 **STATE RACING COMMISSION TO HOLD A RACE MEETING IN THE STATE UNDER**
 15 **TITLE 11 OF THE BUSINESS REGULATION ARTICLE.**

16 9–1A–09.

17 [(a) In this section, “racing licensee” means the holder of a license issued by the
 18 State Racing Commission to hold a race meeting in the State under Title 11 of the Business
 19 Regulation Article.]

20 [(b)] **(A)** As a condition of eligibility for funding under § 9–1A–29 of this subtitle,
 21 a racing licensee shall:

22 (1) (i) **1.** for Rosecroft Raceway, **FOR ANY YEAR THAT FUNDING IS**
 23 **PROVIDED**, conduct a minimum of 60 annual live racing days unless otherwise agreed to
 24 by the racing licensee and the organization that represents the majority of licensed
 25 standardbred owners and trainers in the State or unless the racing licensee is prevented
 26 by weather, acts of God, or other circumstances beyond the racing licensee’s control; and

27 [(ii)] **2.** for Ocean Downs Racetrack, **FOR ANY YEAR THAT**
 28 **FUNDING IS PROVIDED**, conduct a minimum of 40 annual live racing days unless
 29 otherwise agreed to by the racing licensee and the organization that represents the majority
 30 of licensed standardbred owners and trainers in the State or unless the racing licensee is
 31 prevented by weather, acts of God, or other circumstances beyond the racing licensee’s
 32 control; **AND**

33 **(II) IF THE RACING LICENSEE RECEIVES FUNDING WITHOUT**
 34 **PROVIDING AND EXPENDING A MATCHING FUND, AGREE TO CONDUCT LIVE RACING**

1 DAYS IN THE STATE FOR AT LEAST 10 YEARS AFTER THE CONSTRUCTION PLAN
2 REQUIRED UNDER 9-1A-29(E) OF THIS SUBTITLE IS COMPLETE;

3 (2) develop and submit to the State Racing Commission a multiyear plan
4 to improve the quality and marketing of horse racing at racetrack locations owned or
5 operated by the racing licensee in Maryland, which shall include:

6 (i) goals, indicators, and timelines for specific actions that will be
7 taken by the racing licensee to improve the quality and marketing of the horse racing
8 industry in Maryland; and

9 (ii) a master plan for capital improvements that reflects, at a
10 minimum:

11 1. commitments that have been made to the State Racing
12 Commission;

13 2. updates to any prior master plan specifically identifying
14 capital improvements and expenditures made on or after January 1, 2018; and

15 3. an ongoing investment in capital maintenance and
16 improvements in the horse racing facilities; AND

17 (3) for each year that funding is requested, spend at least the following
18 minimum amounts for capital maintenance and improvements, which may include
19 amounts provided as a matching fund [as required] **IF THE RACING LICENSEE ELECTS**
20 **TO PROVIDE AND EXPEND A MATCHING FUND** under § 9-1A-29(e)(2) of this subtitle:

21 (i) for Rosecroft Raceway, \$300,000; and

22 (ii) for Ocean Downs Racetrack, \$300,000.

23 **[(c)] (B)** As part of the capital maintenance and improvement items in the plan
24 submitted under subsection **[(b)(2)] (A)(2)** of this section, a racing licensee shall include
25 any improvements necessary to ensure that the condition of any part of the racetrack
26 facility where individuals reside is satisfactory for human habitation and meets minimum
27 housing and sanitation standards in the county where the facility is located.

28 **[(d)] (C)** The plans required under subsection **[(b)] (A)** of this section shall also
29 be provided to the Department of General Services and to the Legislative Policy Committee
30 of the General Assembly.

31 9-1A-28.

32 (h) (1) To obtain operating assistance under this section:

1 (i) a [holder of a racing license to race] **RACING LICENSEE** at Ocean
2 Downs Race Course or Rosecroft Raceway may apply to the Secretary of Labor for the
3 reimbursement of expenditures made by the racing licensee to conduct the annual live
4 racing schedule; and

5 (ii) a [holder of a racing license to race] **RACING LICENSEE** at
6 Rosecroft Raceway shall:

7 1. agree to rehire workers employed at the facility prior to
8 the end of live racing on June 27, 2008; and

9 2. recognize collective bargaining agreements that were in
10 place as of June 1, 2008.

11 9-1A-29.

12 (a) There is a Racetrack Facility Renewal Account under the authority of the
13 State Racing Commission.

14 (b) (6) (i) Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the State Racing
15 Commission may use the services of a certified public accountant to review an eligible
16 request for **OR THE EXPENDITURES OF** a grant under this section.

17 (ii) [The holder of a license to hold a race meeting in the State] **A**
18 **RACING LICENSEE** that has requested a grant under this section shall reimburse the State
19 Racing Commission for any expenditures for services under subparagraph (i) of this
20 paragraph.

21 (c) Except as provided in subsection (d)(1) of this section, funds from the Account
22 shall be used to provide a grant to the [holder of a license to hold a race meeting in the
23 State] **RACING LICENSEE** for racetrack facility capital construction and improvements.

24 (e) **(1)** In order to obtain a grant, a [holder of a license to hold a race meeting
25 in the State] **RACING LICENSEE** shall[:

26 **(1)]** submit a capital construction plan to be implemented within a specified
27 time frame to the State Racing Commission for approval[; and].

28 **(2) SUBJECT TO § 9-1A-09(A)(1)(II) OF THIS SUBTITLE AND THE**
29 **APPROVAL OF THE GRANT FOR THE CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PLAN BY THE STATE**
30 **RACING COMMISSION, THE RACING LICENSEE MAY** provide and expend a matching
31 fund.

32 (f) **(1)** After a grant has been provided under this section, the State Racing
33 Commission shall:

1 [(1)] (I) in consultation with the Department of General Services,
2 monitor the implementation of the approved capital construction plan; and

3 [(2)] (II) make provisions for recapture of grant money if the capital
4 construction plan is not implemented within the time frame approved by the State Racing
5 Commission.

6 (2) IF A RACING LICENSEE RECEIVES A GRANT FOR A CAPITAL
7 CONSTRUCTION PLAN WITHOUT EXPENDING A MATCHING FUND AND DOES NOT
8 CONDUCT LIVE RACING DAYS IN THE STATE FOR AT LEAST 10 YEARS AFTER THE
9 CONSTRUCTION PLAN IS COMPLETE, THE STATE RACING COMMISSION SHALL:

10 (I) CALCULATE THE AMOUNT TO BE REPAID ON A PRO RATA
11 BASIS; AND

12 (II) RECAPTURE THE GRANT MONEY IN THE AMOUNT AS
13 CALCULATED UNDER ITEM (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH.

14 (h) (1) The State Racing Commission shall adopt regulations to implement the
15 provisions of this section, including regulations to:

16 (i) address minimum criteria for the types of improvements to be
17 made by the [holder of a license] RACING LICENSEE; [and]

18 (ii) establish a formula to allocate funds under subsection (d)(2) of
19 this section between Rosecroft Raceway and Ocean Downs Race Course; AND

20 (III) ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR A RACING LICENSEE THAT
21 REQUESTS A GRANT FOR A CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PLAN WITHOUT EXPENDING A
22 MATCHING FUND.

23 (2) If Rosecroft Raceway is closed and no longer used for live racing the
24 unencumbered fund balance, including accrued interest, of the amount available to
25 Rosecroft Raceway from the Racetrack Facility Renewal Account under subsection (d)(1)(ii)
26 of this section shall be made available to Ocean Downs Race Course.

27 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
28 1, 2026.