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BILL NO.: SB 987

TITLE: Racing and Community Development Act of 2020

SPONSOR: Senator Guzzone

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 25, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 987 – Racing and Community Development Act of 2020. The bill authorizes the Maryland Stadium Authority to issue up to \$375,000,000 of bonds for the redevelopment of the Laurel Park and Pimlico racing facilities.

Maryland’s rich equestrian heritage and traditions are woven deep into the State’s history and identity. Upholding this heritage is critical to the State’s character, and investments in the preservation of equestrian industries support a staple of Maryland’s tourism efforts and uplift the various communities that are intertwined with those industries.

SB 987 provides a comprehensive plan to revitalize two of horse racing’s most important sites – the Pimlico Race Course and Laurel Park. Passage of this legislation will ensure that Maryland retains the Preakness Stakes. The second jewel of the Triple Crown has been held in Baltimore for almost 150 years, and losing this event would be devastating for the city. SB 987 will also make critical community development investments in Baltimore’s treasured Park Heights community, ensuring that the residents surrounding Pimlico are incorporated into the area’s revitalization.

Baltimore County also encourages the State to consider similar investments at the Timonium Fairgrounds. The old Timonium Raceway comes to life each summer for live racing during the Maryland State Fair, but the track faces aging infrastructure issues not unlike those found at Pimlico and Laurel Park. The Timonium Raceway is another important piece of Maryland’s horse racing history, and it deserves a similar revitalization.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 987. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.