



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 1056 – Racing and Community Development Act of 2020

SPONSOR: The Speaker

HEARING DATE: February 25, 2020

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 1056** contingent on the addition of language regarding the conveyance of the Bowie Race Course Training Center. As drafted, House Bill 1056 provides for the redevelopment of Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore City and Laurel Park in Anne Arundel County through bond issuances, funding mechanisms and fund transfers, the ownership and management of racing facilities, and tax incentives. With regard to the Bowie Race Course Training Center, this bill would create a task force to decide the future ownership of the Bowie Race Track property.

Prince George's County has played a part in Maryland's rich history of horse racing. For generations, the County has hosted races at the Rosecroft Raceway in Fort Washington and at the Bowie Race Track in the City of Bowie. Although the Bowie Race Track hosted its last race in July 1985 and the training facility has been closed since 2015, the City of Bowie and Prince George's County has remained focused on acquiring the land for other uses.

In Prince George's County, the City of Bowie, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission have been devoted to determining a community use for the property. The bill as written would create a taskforce but offers no security that the County will be conveyed any portion of the property. In comparison Senate Bill 987 contains language that will support this purpose. Therefore, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive suggests adding the following language on page 9 after line 6:

(D) (1) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2024, THE OWNER OF THE BOWIE RACE COURSE TRAINING CENTER SHALL CONVEY:

(I) THE PORTION OF THE BOWIE RACE COURSE TRAINING CENTER PROPERTY THAT IS WITHIN 100 FEET OF THE TOP OF THE PATUXENT RIVER BANK TO THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION TO BE USED FOR PASSIVE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING HIKING, WILDLIFE VIEWING, PICNICKING, AND WALKING; AND

(II) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE REMAINING PORTION OF THE BOWIE RACE COURSE TRAINING CENTER PROPERTY TO THE CITY OF BOWIE.

(2) (I) THE PROPERTY TRANSFERRED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1)(II) 1 OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY ONLY:

1. BE USED FOR ACTIVE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, SOCCER, AND CRICKET; AND

2. HAVE ONE STRUCTURE THAT IS UP TO 50,000 SQUARE FEET CONSTRUCTED ON THE PROPERTY.

(II) THE CITY OF BOWIE SHALL ENTER INTO A JOINT USE AGREEMENT WITH THE BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY FOR THE USE OF THE ACTIVE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY FACILITIES ON THE PROPERTY.

If these amendments are adopted, along with the taskforce, Prince George's County will be poised to determine the use of this land that will serve an important community function for years to come just as it did in the past.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 1056 WITH AMENDMENTS** and asks for a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report.