



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

March 4, 2021

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
130 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 1259 – Horse Racing – Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is providing information on House Bill 1259. The bill would modernize the statute as it relates to racing at Fair Hill by more accurately reflecting existing practice, as well as updating text consistent with the Maryland Style Manual. The bill also requires a \$1.3 million appropriation to the Fair Hill Improvement Fund from fiscal years 2023 through 2027 for the operation and maintenance of facilities within the special event area at Fair Hill.

The State, working with a multi-faceted group of partners in both the public and private sectors, has invested significantly to upgrade the existing, aging infrastructure in the already-developed area of Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area. Improvements include an upgrade to the turf racing track, timber course, grandstand area, water distribution system, addition of competition arenas, and general upgrades to the special event area. Additional improvements are planned, including expansion of popular equine camping sites. More than \$25 million of State money has been invested at the site so far. These improvements are designed with an eye toward attracting world-class events and to better capitalize on racing days allotted to the site. The site will host the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill beginning this October. This is the highest level of competition in the sport of Three Day Eventing, also known as the triathlon of equestrian sports. Fair Hill will be only the second site in the United States, and only the seventh site in the world to host an event of this caliber.

The department recognizes the need to revise statute to reflect proper drafting technique, as well as updating the text to reflect current practice. Though the mandating of an appropriation is not ideal, the department would like the committee to consider the significant investment in the infrastructure that has already been made, and the need to properly maintain and manage that site -- especially as it prepares to be on the world stage this fall hosting the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill.

Thank you for allowing the department to provide the above information for the committee's careful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

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