

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on
SB594 - Winery and Vineyard Economic Development Grant Program:
Favorable

Hearing before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,
February 23, 2022



The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based, umbrella trade association of the entire horse industry in Maryland. Our membership includes horse farms and stables, horse-related businesses, and horse owners, representing all facets of the Maryland equestrian community, from the owners of race horses to the owners of trail horses or just beloved retired companion horses. As such, we represent over 30,000 Marylanders.

MHC deeply appreciates the importance of value added agriculture to the viability and sustainability of small and family-owned farms. The ability to diversify by adding ag-based products and services to their operations not only is often critical to the economic success of the farm, but it also enhances appreciation and enjoyment by the general public. This enhanced appreciation pays dividends in future efforts to conserve farmland.

MHC has already been witness to the happy marriage of wineries, vineyards and other on-farm alcohol producers, with horse-keeping, on the farms of several of our members. SB 594 will provide an important tool to assist our members who want to add or expand a winery or vineyard in connection with their horse businesses.

We urge the Committee to give SB 594 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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