

# **Support of HB 116 Agriculture - Right to Engage in**

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: FAV



3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

January 19, 2022

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 116 - Agriculture - Right to Engage in Equine Activities**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 116, legislation that simply declares that the intent of the General Assembly is that residents of Maryland have a right to engage in equine activities subject to regulations and restrictions under laws enacted by the General Assembly.

The 2018 Economic Impact Study produced by the American Horse Council confirms that Maryland's horse industry adds more than \$1.3 billion to Maryland's economy. The report found that the horse industry total employment impact is more than 21,000 jobs, including a more than \$500 million impact from the horse racing sector alone. With more than 101,000 horses, Maryland boasts more horses -- 10.5 horses per square mile -- than any other state in the nation.

**Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:**

- We support the recognition of equine as part of the agricultural industry and not as companion animals. Riding lessons, boarding, or training given on a farm, and pleasure horses should be considered a part of the normal agriculture practices.
- We strongly support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect the privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations, or legislation. We support actions to ensure that farmers are protected from liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal production practices.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 116 AND REQUEST A FAVORABLE REPORT**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Colby Ferguson  
Director of Government Relations

*For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396*

# **Testimony - Right to Equine Activities.pages.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: FAV

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on  
HB 116 - Agriculture - Right to Engage in Equine Activities: SUPPORT

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based, umbrella trade association of the entire horse industry in Maryland. Our membership includes breed, interest and discipline associations, plus horse farms and stables, horse-related businesses, and horse owners representing all facets of the Maryland equestrian community, from the owners of race horses and race tracks, to the owners of international level competition horses, local sport horses, trail horses or just beloved retired companion horses. The owner of Pimlico, Laurel and Rosecroft racetracks is a member, as are vets, tack stores, and other farms, businesses and enthusiasts throughout the state. As such, we stand for over 30,000 Marylanders.



MHC supports this bill, which would establish the intent of the General Assembly that residents of Maryland have a right to engage in equine activities subject to regulations under laws enacted by the General Assembly. The bill is a formal legislative recognition of the vital role played by the state's equestrians in Maryland's cultural heritage, social fabric, recreational resources, and environmental and economic health. In addition, the bill will add the weight of legislative intent when questions arise at the state and local level concerning land use, resource allocation for parks and trails, etc.

Horses and horse sports have been a part of Maryland life since before this nation was created. The Maryland Jockey Club, founded in 1743, is the oldest sporting organization - of any type - in North America. Today, there are over 100,000 horses in Maryland (more per square mile than any state in the Union), and 51.8% of Maryland households contain horse enthusiasts. The majority of Maryland riders are trail riders. Each year, there are about 1500 equine 4H projects in the state, 55 high school equestrian teams, 22 pony clubs and 12 college teams. Maryland is also an international equestrian powerhouse, with the Preakness that dates to 1875, and the new Maryland 5\* at Fair Hill, one of only seven such events in the world.

There are horses in every county in the state. There are 200 equine organizations and almost 800 licensed stables. As a result of the pandemic, Marylanders across the state have flocked to riding centers as a way to enjoy outdoor recreation in a naturally socially-distanced sport that provides both physical exercise and the mental health benefits that come from interaction with animals and the natural world. The equestrian community provides additional mental and physical health services through 40 therapeutic riding programs that serve those with mental, physical and developmental challenges, including wounded warriors and their families.

**MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL**  
PO BOX 606  
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Equine activities also offer environmental and quality of life benefits to the entire population, not just equestrians. A maintained pasture is second only to forest in its effectiveness in filtering runoff into local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. And the equestrian community supports the conservation, preservation and management of open space and natural resources using primarily private dollars.

The Maryland horse industry represents \$2.1 billion in economic impact; 28,000 direct jobs; \$1 billion in annual spending by participants; \$78 million in tax revenue. At last count, there were 16,000 equine-related properties occupying over 705,000 acres (almost 10% of Maryland's total land area, and over 25% of Maryland's agricultural land). The racing and competition sectors support local economies by drawing in out-of-state dollars that are spent on food, lodging and transportation. The industry also supports local hay, grain, and straw farmers with \$80,000,000 in annual expenditures.

HB 116 recognizes the importance of the equestrian industry to Maryland life.

We urge the Committee to give HB 116 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maryland Horse Council  
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)

**MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL**  
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# House Bill 116 - MASCD - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Jen Nelson

Position: FAV



January 19, 2022

The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chairman  
House Environment & Transportation Committee

**Re: House Bill 116 – Right to Engage in Equine Activities**

Position: *Support*

Chairman Barve & Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) to express our support for House Bill 116 – Right to Engage in Equine Activities. This bill protects the right of all Maryland residents who wish to engage in equine activities.

The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts, incorporated in 1956, promotes practical and effective soil, water, and natural resource related programs to all citizens through individual conservation districts on a voluntary basis through leadership, education, cooperation, and local direction. By supporting this bill, MASCD continues their legacy of supporting natural resource programs and promotes public open space access to all Marylanders.

I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 116, which shows your dedicated support to the entire State of Maryland and the agricultural community. Thank you for your kind consideration and attention to this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Nelson, Executive Director  
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts

# **Testimony - Right to Ride HB 116 2022.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joyce Bell

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY of Joyce Bell, Easton (Talbot County), Maryland 21601

**HB0116**

**RIGHT TO ENGAGE IN EQUINE ACTIVITIES**

**SUPPORT**

I support HB0116 because it reinforces and further validates the fact that horses were an integral part of Maryland's history – and horses still are today, over two centuries later. Paintings and writings from Maryland's earliest beginnings attest to the importance horses – from plowing and transportation to racing and hunting.

In today's world, Marylanders continue to enjoy horses in some of the same ways, but in addition, now we have 4-H, High School Rodeo, competitions in various disciplines (cross country, stadium jumping, dressage, endurance, competitive trail riding, jousting, obstacle competitions, driving, and more). The horse industry is full of jobs across all sectors. The economic benefit to Maryland of these equine activities cannot be underestimated.

Horses also may be one of the best tools ever for fostering healthy, well-adjusted children. They are the perfect antidote to today's digital mania. Horses get kids off the couch and out into nature. Riding -- and grooming, pushing wheelbarrows, carrying buckets -- is terrific exercise while developing flexibility and coordination. With childhood obesity tripling from 1971 to 2011, getting kids off the couch is more important now than ever, when there are so many negative influences from mass media and pop culture. Owning or caring for horses promotes responsibility, accountability, patience, empathy, dedication, and self-discipline – all key attributes to success to people of all ages.

Importantly, this statutory acknowledgement of the importance of equestrian activities can be a big help when working on multi-use trail issues.

Please give HB0116 a favorable report.

# **Love Testimony\_HB 116\_2022.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Love

Position: FAV

SARA N. LOVE  
Legislative District 16  
Montgomery County

Environment and Transportation  
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 19, 2022

**Sponsor Testimony for HB 116 –  
The Right to Engage in Equine Activities**  
Delegate Sara Love

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

For the record, I am Delegate Sara Love here to present House bill 116, establishing the right to engage in equine activities in Maryland.

Maryland has a long tradition of horseback riding. It is an integral part of our culture, our heritage, our land use, our economy, our recreation, our veterans' support, our Maryland pride.

Hundreds of thousands of Marylanders participate in equine activities every year, whether they enjoy recreational riding, they engage in competition, they are part of - or enjoy watching - the racing sector, or they benefit from the therapeutic riding programs.

We have several horse racing facilities, including Pimlico and Laurel. We host the historic Preakness horse race, part of the storied Triple Crown. The General Assembly has spent a lot of time, and the State a lot of money, on legislation supporting horse racing.

Every county in Maryland is home to thousands of horses. In fact, there are more horses per square mile in Maryland than in any state in the country. Over 705,000 acres are used for equine activities, which is almost 10% of Maryland's total land area and over 25% of Maryland's agricultural land. Furthermore, pastures are among the best filtering devices to protect the Chesapeake Bay from harmful runoff.

The Maryland Horse Industry provides over \$2.1 billion in economic impact. There is \$78 million in tax revenue. There are close to 30,000 industry jobs, plus the other jobs supporting the industry such as construction.

For the foregoing reasons, I request a favorable report on HB 116.

**22 01 17 SF HB116 Written.pdf**

Uploaded by: Stacy Frank

Position: FAV

## HB 116 – Written Testimony

January 17, 2022

I am writing to express a favorable view of HB116 the “Right to Ride” bill being introduced by Del Love.

I have been involved in equestrian activities for nearly 60 years as both a professional, competitor and leisure participant. When my husband and I were searching for a property for our horse farm 20 years ago we looked in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware and ultimately decided on Maryland. Maryland’s history and current involvement in equine related activities and businesses made it the ideal location.

We are Caroline County residents and live right across the street from Tuckahoe State Park which is the home of the Tuckahoe Equestrian Center (TEC) and miles of multi-use trails which are shared by riders, hikers, bikers, birders, wildlife enthusiasts and families just looking to enjoy being out in nature, especially during these difficult COVID times.

We support this bill because Equestrian activities are an important part of Maryland’s economy and contribute to the environmentally friendly use of the State’s land and natural resources as well as providing wholesome activities for residents of every persuasion, age or ethnicity.

Please vote in favor of this bill.

Sincerely,

Stacy Frank  
TEC board member  
Caroline County resident  
And life-long equestrienne