



Charles County Government

CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., *President*
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Mark Belton
County Administrator

March 30, 2022

Bill: SB 297 Gaming - Sports Wagering Facilities - Locations
Committee: House—Ways and Means
Senate – Budget and Taxation
Position: UNFAVORABLE

On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners for Charles County, we OPPOSE inclusion of Charles County in SB 297 Gaming - Sports Wagering Facilities – Locations. We request an amendment that will remove Charles County from the 10-mile radius restriction, and instead allow for a summer study so that we may more fully understand the impact of the increased radius.

SB 297 expands the prohibited radius for class B-1 and B-2 sports wagering facilities from 1.5 miles to 10 miles. The Board of Commissioners discussed this bill with the understanding that the radius was an unobstructed 10 miles “as the crow flies,” and not driving miles. While such an expansion may be a welcomed amendment for other affected counties, Charles County does not support further restricting where sports wagering facilities may locate in our County. Charles County is unique in that our current OTB operator is accessed by way of Colonial Beach, Virginia, although licensed by the State of Maryland because of its location on the Potomac River. Another location within a 10-mile radius may provide greater convenience to our residents and visitors. To the extent that indirect income is generated from the existing OTB operator, it likely benefits the surrounding Virginia area, and not Charles County.

It is our hope that our waterfront will become an attraction for economic development in the coming years, and we do not believe it is prudent to restrict the kinds of development that may be enticed to locate to this part of our County, to include sports wagering. We do not agree with artificially prohibiting competition; we should instead allow consumers to have choices and decide where they are best accommodated.

For the reasons stated, the Charles County Commissioners OPPOSE SB 297 as written, and respectfully request to be removed from the legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., consisting of stylized initials and a surname.

County Commissioners of Charles County
Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President

cc: Charles County Delegation