



*Susan O'Neill, Chair*

*Charlotte Davis, Executive Director*

Testimony in Support of  
Senate Bill 720 – Maryland Horse Racing Act – Sunset Extension  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
March 8, 2023

**The Rural Maryland Council supports House Bill – Maryland Horse Racing Act – Sunset Extension.** This bill extends the sunset date for the Maryland Horse Racing Act from July 1, 2024 to July 1, 2034. The bill will take effect on October 1, 2023.

The Maryland Racing Commission was formed in 1920 and oversees and regulates both the harness and thoroughbred horse racing industry in Maryland. This includes Maryland's seven off-track betting sites. Maryland is also the proud host of the Preakness, the second jewel of thoroughbred racing's Triple Crown. All the participants, from the track itself to the jockeys to the concessionaires who provide the food and drink at the racetrack, are licensed by the Maryland Racing Commission. The Commission ensures proper distribution of wagering dollars and regularly reviews the financial statements of the racing associations. The Maryland Racing Commission also maintains its own lab to test for drugs in horses to maintain the integrity of the sport. All of these measures protect and perpetuate first class horse racing in Maryland.

The Maryland Horse Industry is integral to the State's economy with a \$2.1 billion economic impact, of which \$572 million is generated through the racing sector that supports 5,214 jobs and adds \$365 million in value in the state economy. The Maryland Horse Racing Act and associated Commission are integral in keeping this industry vibrant in the State.

The Rural Maryland Council supports the cultural heritage of the Thoroughbred horse racing industry and respectfully requests your favorable support of Senate Bill 720.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.

**“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”**