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Monday, March 25, 2024

Subject: Testimony in Favor with Amendments for House Bill 1319 - Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation

Dear Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Riverboat on the Potomac to express our position of “favorable with amendments” on House Bill 1319, which seeks to authorize and implement Internet Gaming in Maryland. As a small, minority-owned business, we recognize the potential benefits that iGaming could bring to our state, both economically and recreationally. However, we believe that certain amendments are necessary to ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion within this emerging industry, particularly for businesses like ours.

Our support for HB 1319 is contingent upon the incorporation of amendments that address the following concerns:

1. **Inclusion of B-2 and Mobile Licensees:** Incorporation of amendments that provide a clearer pathway for B-2 or mobile licensees, including minority and women-owned businesses, to participate in iGaming. This is a crucial step towards reducing disparities between large casinos and smaller entities, ensuring a more equitable landscape within the industry. Specifically, we advocate for amendments that allow B-2 Class or Mobile Classes of Sports Wagering Licensees who are minority or women-owned to be considered for licensing waivers, promoting diversity and inclusion.
2. **Licensing Fees:** While inclusivity amendments are a positive development, the high initial fees pose significant barriers to entry for smaller entities. We urge the committee to consider reviewing and possibly adjusting these fees to ensure they do not disproportionately disadvantage small, minority-owned businesses.

In conclusion, Riverboat on the Potomac supports HB 1319 with the proposed amendments, believing that such changes will foster a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse iGaming industry in Maryland. We appreciate the committee's consideration of our testimony and look forward to contributing positively to the dialogue surrounding this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Antonio Jones, Managing Partner
Riverboat on-the Potomac, LLC

If you have any questions, please contact:

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