

MTHA - HB 1524 - FAV - Budget and Taxation.pdf

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Position: FAV



April 5, 2024

Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 1524 - Favorable

Dear Chairman Guzzone:

The Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association ("MTHA") is the long-time officially recognized organization which represents the interests of Maryland's Thoroughbred owners and trainers and the thousands of backstretch workers and support businesses that are the backbone of Maryland Thoroughbred racing. Together with the breeding industry, we are a billion-dollar contributor to the State's economy.

For more than a decade, the horsemen and breeders have collaborated with our track operator and the General Assembly to meet significant economic and competitive challenges to stabilize Maryland racing. We supported the creation of the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operating Authority and have worked closely with them. In our presentation to the Authority last fall, we urged them to consider the establishment of a state-of-the art training facility to compliment a reconstructed Pimlico that would serve as the year-round hub of Maryland racing. We further urged the Authority to strongly consider the creation of a not-for-profit entity to manage and operate racing in Maryland on a year-round basis as the best operating model for Maryland racing. We were pleased that the Authority agreed with and supported our recommendations. House Bill 1524 would make this vision a reality. It is a historic decision for the General Assembly and a seminal moment in the history of Maryland racing.

We thank you for supporting this vital legislation and your longstanding commitment to Maryland thoroughbred racing. Lastly, we thank Authority Chair Greg Cross and the Authority members for their dedication and commitment to this effort.

We strongly urge a favorable report for House Bill 1524.

Very truly yours,

Katharine M. Voss
President, MTHA

HB1524-Horse Racing - Racing Facility Ownership an

Uploaded by: Jennifer Witten

Position: INFO



April 5, 2024 / Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Position: Letter of Information

Bill: HB1524-Horse Racing - Racing Facility Ownership and Construction - Racing Operations

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding HB1524. LifeBridge Health is a regional health system, one of the largest employers in the Park Heights area of Northwest Baltimore. Our largest facility, Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, a level 2 trauma program and independent academic medical center hosting up to 150 medical residents in a fully accredited medical education program is located adjacent to Pimlico Racecourse. LifeBridge purchased the easternmost twenty-two acres of the track's property in 2015, after enjoying full access from the owners for fifteen years prior to the purchase for daily parking by hospital employees. LifeBridge has been a supportive partner and continues to support the development of the Pimlico site.

LifeBridge has developed part of the property purchased near the Pimlico site over the last couple of years including the Center for Hope, a Child Advocacy Center that is the largest in the state. Center for Hope is a comprehensive violence intervention and prevention "Center of Excellence." Programming in the building includes prevention and treatment for domestic violence, elder abuse, street violence (Safe Streets and hospital-based responders) and the Baltimore Child Abuse Center. This first improvement, along with implementation of the Park Heights Master Plan vision is the beginning of safe-affordable housing, green spaces, a library, and other projects throughout southern Park Heights.

As requested, LifeBridge delayed construction for an ambulatory center that was to be co-located on this same property to allow further considerations of Pimlico redevelopment. Due to the delays, we have had to relocate the center to another site closer to the hospital. This requires new permitting and additional costs; however, we are committed to completing the project within a two-three-year period to limit the additional barriers this has created for our providers and patients accessing those services. As the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operation Authority moves forward with proposed plans, we ask for ongoing communication and transparency pertaining to development of the Pimlico Site and how any planned projects impact our nearby property, patient access to care and our employees. With the building of the Sinai Cancer Center, Ambulatory Center, and Pimlico construction we will have to find creative measures to address parking needs for the thousands of employees that work in the Sinai area.

We thank the Baltimore 41 Delegation in securing ongoing community engagement and seeking input through the Pimlico Redevelopment Community Compact. LifeBridge Health serves as an anchor institution with our partners seeking continued investments for the community at large. We ask the Senate to support the community investment provisions within the bill and future resources that align with the goals of the state and community. On behalf of LifeBridge Health we appreciate the considerations and commitment to the Pimlico Area Community.

Jennifer Witten, Vice President, Government Relations & Community Development

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