

Misty Manor Testimony_SB452

Starting as Trails End, Misty Manor has been offering trail rides, lessons, camp, and horse boarding to the public since the early 1970s. Passage of SB 452 will negatively impact our farm.

At Misty Manor we go out of our way to ensure our riders are safe.

For trail rides we offer helmets to all our patrons and insist that anyone under 18 wear them at all times when on, or near, our horses. When we take out rides, we have a guide leading the ride and a guide following the ride keeping eyes on the riders while both guides provide and repeat instructions so everyone can hear the information.

When we give lessons, all participants wear helmets, and the lessons are taught by certified instructors.

When we hold summer camp anyone attending must wear a helmet and there are instructors and aids helping and keeping everyone safe.

For many, many years we have used a liability waiver as Maryland does not have limited liability or a hold-harmless provision. This past year (2023) our insurance provider added another liability waiver specifically for the insurance. Hence riders at Misty Manor sign two rental agreement liability waivers before they are allowed to get on a horse.

The nature of any activity with horses is potentially dangerous, no matter how many safeguards are put in place. Persons who wish to work with, rent, or use horses assume the risk of that action. Liability agreements turn that implied assumption of risk into an expressed assumption. Without the agreements, our small, woman-owned business will not only have increased liability but almost certainly increased insurance costs and frivolous litigation.

Maryland proudly expounds on its equine heritage. Misty Manor has brought significant revenue to the state for more than the past half century. We work hard to keep horseback riding open and available to the public at a reasonable price. But SB 452 puts small farms and riding stables like ours in significant danger of closing down and going out of business. Please do not take away the liability protection for our farm and the ability for the public to experience horses.