

'SB 452 Liability Waivers : Written Testimony

My name is Christina Micek and I am the Vice President of Trail Riders of Today (representing trail riders in the state of Maryland) and the Secretary for Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trails Association (representing the equestrian community in Montgomery County).

We are writing to express that if SB 452 and HB 162 were passed, it would negatively impact our members greatly representing the equestrian, hiking, and recreational trail community. Most horse riding in the state includes some sort of waiver that is presented for individuals to sign. Maryland and Virginia are known as horse country, and it is an important part of our states legacies.

Those impacted include but are not limited to:

Boarding Barns

Lesson Barns

Equestrian, Mountain Bike, Kayak, and Bike Competition Venues

Individual Horseback Riding , Kayak, mountain bike and biking, wilderness Instructors

Trail Riding Venues

Mountain Bike, kayak, and bike rental companies

Not only would some establishments no longer feel comfortable offering these services any longer if this law went into effect, but if an individual or business would continue in these activities, they would most likely see a large increase in insurance rate, liability, and lawsuits.

We are uncertain how a bill with such far-reaching implications was allowed to get so far through the legislative process without opposition. We believe that there has simply not been enough attention given to this bill, and that the citizens of Maryland are not aware of its proposal. The wording of the bill also offers little clarity into the certain circumstances intended to make a liability waiver void.

We recommend circulating this proposed bill more widely, especially to businesses who rely on liability waivers to run, as well as to contact insurance companies to see what the possible impact would be on Maryland businesses. We are extremely concerned for the impact to many small business owners in the recreation space.

Sincerely,

Trail Riders of Today

Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trail Association

Written by Christina Micek representing a membership of upwards of 700 equestrians and trail users throughout the state.