

Monday, February 26, 2024

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

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Chesapeake Gaming, LLC, to offer our testimony in favor of House Bill 1319, with proposed amendments that aim to foster inclusivity, equity, and diversity in Maryland's burgeoning iGaming industry. Our business, deeply rooted in the community of Boonsboro, Washington County, proudly carries the distinction of being women-owned.

I am Jennifer DiPietro, the founder of Chesapeake Gaming, and I have always been deeply committed to promoting diversity and inclusion within our industry. This commitment was recognized when I was honored with a citation for WBE of the Year by Baltimore County in 2007. For over 25 years, we have maintained our certification as a Minority Business Enterprise. My dedication to these values goes beyond our company's walls; I have personally invested time in mentoring up-and-coming women and minority entrepreneurs, guiding them through the early stages of starting their businesses.

The opportunity that House Bill 1319 presents to Maryland—legalizing and regulating internet gaming—is immense. Yet, the potential for small, minority, and women-owned businesses like ours to be overshadowed without legislative amendments is a significant concern. The current landscape in neighboring states like West Virginia and Pennsylvania, where iGaming thrives, underscores the urgency for Maryland to create a level playing field.

Our advocacy for HB 1319 is underpinned by our belief in the virtues of diversity and fair competition. A diverse iGaming sector is not merely a token of equity; it is a catalyst for innovation, heightened customer engagement, and broader economic benefits.

To this end, we propose critical amendments to HB 1319 to ensure that Chesapeake Gaming and similar entities are not just participants but competitive players in Maryland's iGaming narrative:

1. **Inclusion of B-2 and Mobile Licensees:** It is essential to amend the bill to categorically include B-2 and Mobile Classes of Sports Wagering Licensees, with a particular emphasis on those owned by minorities and women, within the iGaming licensing eligibility framework. This change is pivotal in democratizing access to the iGaming industry and ensuring a rich tapestry of operators that mirrors Maryland's diverse business landscape.

Chesapeake Gaming, LLC, is poised to enrich Maryland's iGaming ecosystem with our unique perspective and commitment to excellence. By adopting the proposed amendments, HB 1319 will not only pave the way for a more inclusive and dynamic industry but also position Maryland as a formidable player in the regional gaming arena.

We appreciate your consideration of our testimony and sincerely urge the committee to integrate these amendments into HB 1319.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JD', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jennifer DiPietro
Founder
Chesapeake Gaming, LLC

If you have any questions, please contact:
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