



MARYLAND STATE FAIR

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February 14, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy & Environment
Maryland General Assembly
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for SB 563 – Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund -
Establishment (Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Act)

Dear Chairperson Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I write to you today on behalf of the Maryland State Fair in support of SB563, legislation that will provide a stable and permanent funding source for the Maryland State Fair and other agricultural fairs and shows across the state that desperately need this funding. This bill is essential to maintaining and strengthening the agricultural heritage, education, and community engagement that these events provide.

Historically, the Maryland State Fair has received funding annually from the special fund, a sum tied to the 42 racing days we transferred to the state after discontinuing our summer horse race meet. Additionally, we, as well as many other fairs and shows, receive funding annually through the Maryland Agriculture Fair Board to support ribbons, awards, and other critical programming. These funds are vital to ensuring the success of our fair and the many other fairs and agricultural and community events across Maryland.

The special fund, primarily financed through unclaimed pari-mutuel tickets from horse racing, has become an increasingly unstable revenue source due to the decline in racing and wagering. Each year, we experience significant reductions in funding, creating uncertainty and making it difficult to budget for the programs and opportunities we offer. SB563 will provide a much-needed solution by reinforcing the intended financial commitments in the original statute and

ensuring a predictable funding stream for Maryland State Fair and the numerous other Maryland fairs and shows.

Agricultural fairs, including the Maryland State Fair, serve as vital educational and economic drivers in our communities. They offer hands-on learning experiences for youth, promote local agriculture, and provide a platform for small businesses, vendors, and entertainers. Without consistent funding, these contributions to our communities are at risk. By passing SB563, the General Assembly will help sustain these time-honored traditions and provide much-needed financial stability.

I respectfully urge the committee to give SB563 a favorable report to safeguard the future of the Maryland State Fair and the many other fairs and shows that enrich our state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Andrew Cashman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "D." and last name "Cashman" clearly distinguishable.

D. Andrew Cashman
General Manager
Maryland State Fair