



Maryland Department of Agriculture

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Agriculture | Maryland's Leading
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Maryland Department of Agriculture Legislative Comment Date: March 24th, 2026

BILL NUMBER: HB 0225
BILL TITLE: Maryland Horse Industry Board - Sunset Extension
MDA POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) respectfully submits this letter in support of *House Bill 225 – Maryland Horse Industry Board – Sunset Extension*, a departmental bill that extends the sunset date of the Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) until 2036.

The Maryland Horse Industry Board plays a critical role in safeguarding both consumers and the integrity of Maryland's equine industry. MHIB serves as the state's licensing authority for commercial stables that board, lesson, rent, rescue, or provide sanctuary services for horses while soliciting business from the public. Through this licensing framework, the Board helps ensure that facilities operating in Maryland meet established standards of care, providing important consumer protections and promoting the health and welfare of horses statewide.

Beyond its regulatory responsibilities, MHIB serves in an advisory capacity to the Secretary of Agriculture on matters affecting the horse industry and fulfills a broad mission that includes regulatory, advisory, promotional, and educational roles. The Board works to raise public awareness of Maryland's equestrian traditions, highlight the positive impact of horses on quality of life, increase visibility of equine activities, support horse owners, and foster appropriate standards of care across the industry.

The Board's work also supports economic development. Maryland's equine sector is a significant contributor to the state's economy, generating an estimated \$2.9 billion annually and supporting jobs, tourism, and rural communities. Through promotional activities, educational and research initiatives, workforce development efforts, and industry coordination, MHIB helps strengthen and grow this important sector.

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Continuity of the Board's work is especially important at this time. MHIB is leading implementation of the newly established Maryland Horse Industry Strategic Plan, formalized through an executive order signed by Governor Wes Moore. This historic initiative provides a unified, coordinated vision for the future of Maryland's diverse horse community, emphasizing growth, sustainability, and collaboration. Extending the Board's sunset date ensures the stability and long-term oversight necessary to carry out this strategic vision effectively.

HB 225 provides a straightforward and necessary extension of the Maryland Horse Industry Board, allowing it to continue fulfilling its consumer protection, advisory, and industry support functions without interruption. For these reasons, MDA strongly supports HB 225 and respectfully requests a favorable report.