

HB0225 - MDA LOS Crossfile.pdf

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Position: FAV



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor

Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Kevin Atticks, Secretary

Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

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.

Contact: Harrison Palmer, Chief of Staff
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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.

HB 225 MHIB Extension -- FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Maryland Horse Council Maryland Horse Council

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on HB 225

Maryland Horse Industry Board – Sunset Extension

Appropriations – January 27, 2026 @ 1 p.m.

FAVORABLE

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them. We are a \$2.9 billion industry.¹

We urge a favorable report on HB 225 to extend the sunset provision of Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) from 2026 to 2036.

Maryland is home to more horses per square mile than any other state in the country, and we are blessed with over 800 lesson and boarding stables that support our large equine population. These lesson and boarding stables are the lifeblood of the industry – they train and educate the next generation of recreational and competition riders, of trainers, of jockeys, and farriers and veterinarians alike.

MHIB plays a critical role in our industry by licensing these lesson and boarding barns to make sure they meet minimum standards of safety and equine health and welfare. We are the only state in the country to have a licensing program of this sort.

¹ See American Horse Council Economic Impact Study for Maryland (2024), available at mdhorsecouncil.org/educational-resources/.



MARYLAND
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MHIB inspectors travel across the state to ensure compliance with the licensing requirements and to report equine animal welfare concerns to the Maryland State Veterinarian and to other members of MDA's Animal Health team.

Maryland's horses deserve our continued best efforts to keep them as healthy, happy, and safe as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)

Info@mdhorsecouncil.org

MDFB - Support - HB225 Maryland Horse Industry Boa

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

March 24th, 2026

To: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Support for HB225 - Maryland Horse Industry Board - Sunset Extension

On behalf of the over 7,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit testimony in support of HB225 - Maryland Horse Industry Board - Sunset Extension. This proposed legislation would extend the sunset date of the Maryland Horse Industry Board from July 1, 2026, to July 1, 2036.

The Maryland Horse Industry Board plays a critical role in supporting one of the state's most significant agricultural sectors. The equine industry contributes substantially to Maryland's rural economy, supports thousands of farm families, preserves open space, and sustains agricultural employment across the state.

House Bill 225 is a straightforward sunset extension that does not expand the Board's authority, alter its structure, or create new regulatory requirements. Instead, it ensures the continuation of an established advisory body that provides industry expertise to the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the General Assembly.

The continuation of the Maryland Horse Industry Board is essential to ensuring consistent industry representation, policy stability, and effective communication between the equine community and state government. The Board provides a formal mechanism for horse owners, breeders, trainers, and farm operators to share expertise and advise the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the General Assembly on issues affecting this capital-intensive, land-based agricultural sector. Maintaining the Board promotes long-term planning certainty for equine operations, supports rural economies, and reinforces the role of horse farms in farmland preservation and open space protection.

House Bill 225 ensures continuity, stability, and industry engagement without creating new regulatory or fiscal burdens. The bill aligns squarely with Maryland Farm Bureau policy and supports the ongoing viability of Maryland's equine industry as a key component of agriculture.

Maryland Farm Bureau urges a favorable report on House Bill 225

Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations

Contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions