



Testimony in Opposition of House Bill 1343
Internet Gaming – Authorization and Implementation

To: Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Chair, Ways and Means Committee

Written testimony from: Kristen Pironis
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Dear Chair Wilkins and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Live! Casino and Arundel Mills, in Anne Arundel County, is Maryland's most visited tourist attraction. On behalf of Visit Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, the destination marketing and management organization for Anne Arundel County, I am writing to express our strong **opposition** to House Bill 1255 regarding the expansion of commercial internet gaming.

The legalization of iGaming in Maryland is a significant threat to our partners, businesses, and community. Internet gaming eliminates the need to travel to brick and mortar casinos, which directly translates to people not eating in adjacent restaurants, staying in hotels, and patronizing shops and retail—Internet Gaming literally makes people stay home and not travel.

Maryland is home to six brick and mortar casinos that support more than 27,000 jobs, have an annual economic impact of \$5.8 billion, and generate \$1.4 billion in taxes, reports the American Gaming Association. In addition, Maryland gaming tax revenue directly funds critical public school construction projects, local impact grants, and supports small and minority-owned businesses.

Internet Gaming jobs will cause a decline in locally held jobs, available wages and benefits, and will directly impact job opportunities for Marylanders with a high school diploma who currently have access to positions like table games dealers, which provide good living wages and benefits. Further, Internet Gaming will harm our casinos and the surrounding entertainment and shopping clusters, many of which opened because of and are directly supported by visitors to casinos—impacting even more jobs and Marylanders.

Legalizing Internet Gaming is a disservice to the people and businesses that support and contribute to Maryland's economy. Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County strongly urges you to oppose this bill. Thank you for your service and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristen Pironis
Chief Executive Officer, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County