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COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Worcester County

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Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins
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Delegate Jessica Feldmark
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Annapolis, MD 21401
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Dear Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark and committee members:

The Worcester County Commissioners strongly oppose HB 1255 Expansion of Commercial Gaming – Internet Gaming Referendum and HB 1343 Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation. We are concerned the introduction of internet gaming to Maryland would threaten existing brick-and-mortar institutions, fuel gambling additions and result in lost revenues to jurisdictions in Worcester County.

Worcester County is home to the Ocean Downs Casino. Since opening its doors in 2011, the casino has grown to become a vital tourism and economic development partner, generating more than \$51 million in local impact grant (LIG) funds to Worcester County, Ocean City, Berlin and Ocean Pines. These funds are reinvested in our communities. Just a few of the many projects our jurisdictions have been able to fund, even in years of economic downtown, include improvements to our roadways and bridges, upgrades to public safety radio systems, additional police vehicles, a new Berlin Police Department, and a new Worcester Technical High School that trains area youth for family sustaining careers right here at home.

Unlike the Ocean Downs Casino, which has established partnerships designed to attract residents and visitors to invest their discretionary income in area hotels, eateries and retail establishments, most online gambling operators are out of state. Every dollar spent gambling online would

equate to a direct loss to our local economy. We respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1255 and HB 1343.

Sincerely,



Theodore J. Elder
President