

Preamble

WHEREAS, Since the 1700s, Maryland's horse industry has been part of the cultural and historical fabric of the State; and

WHEREAS, Maryland is home to historic Pimlico Race Course which was founded in 1870 and Laurel Park which was founded in ~~1991~~ 1911; and

WHEREAS, Pimlico Race Course and Laurel Park are in need of modernization;
and

WHEREAS, Rosecroft Race Course was constructed in 1949 and the last major renovation was in 1991; and

WHEREAS, Maryland's horse industry reaches across the State affecting farm owners, breeders, horsemen, and track personnel from the Eastern Shore to Western Maryland; and

WHEREAS, The more than 900 horse farms in Maryland that encompass more than 200,000 acres provide employment for many Marylanders, preserve green open spaces, and positively impact on land values; and

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland and its citizens would benefit from the retention of open spaces and green spaces in agricultural use, and it is necessary to provide additional programs and funding to preserve the State's horse farms; and

WHEREAS, The horse industry employs more than 15,000 people and generates nearly \$1 billion annually in economic activity for the State, more than any other professional sport in the State; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds and declares that the Maryland horse industry is vulnerable to a decline; and

WHEREAS, The competition from other states for quality racehorses and the betting dollars has increased as a result of mechanisms aimed at increasing purse structures and providing funds for capital improvements to racing facilities in those states; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds and declares that this Act is necessary to preserve, restore, and revitalize the horse racing and breeding industries and preserve in Maryland the economic impact associated with these industries; and

WHEREAS, Increased funding for the redevelopment of racing facilities in the State will enhance the appeal of the sport, and increased attendance will support industry growth; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows: