

Preamble

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

WHEREAS, The competition from other states for quality race horses has increased as a result of more appealing purse structures in other states that have implemented satellite simulcast betting; and

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

WHEREAS, Satellite simulcast betting should increase handles, which will provide for increased purses for Maryland horsemen and breeders; and

WHEREAS, The operation of satellite simulcast betting is currently successful in increasing handles in California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington and has broadened the market base and strengthened the market for horse breeding in these states; and

WHEREAS, The simulcast of Maryland races is sent to racetracks and satellite simulcast facilities in other states, but, except for intertrack wagering, Maryland races cannot be sent to other locations in Maryland; and

WHEREAS, The industry employs almost 20,000 people and generates nearly \$1 billion in economic activity; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds and declares that this Act is necessary to preserve, restore, and revitalize the horse racing industry; and

WHEREAS, Satellite simulcast betting should provide additional business and employment opportunities for all Marylanders, particularly in the areas of ownership, construction, operation, and maintenance of satellite simulcast facilities; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the General Assembly that the process for the awarding of a satellite simulcast betting permit by the Maryland Racing Commission provide equal opportunity for the inclusion of minority applicants; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Maryland Racing Commission be nondiscriminatory in the selection of permit holders to operate satellite simulcast betting; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Maryland Racing Commission ensure that all satellite simulcast facility permit holders not discriminate in the employment of services for the development, construction, operation, and maintenance of such facilities; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of the General Assembly that this legislation will help to encourage greater utilization of the State's horse racing facilities and will help to ensure that the Bowie training facility is improved and maintained to be a state-of-the-art training facility; now, therefore,