

(i) The economic impact of the horse industry in Maryland, including both the racing and breeding components of the industry and public-private partnership possibilities;

(ii) The economic impact on the horse racing industry of the financial assistance provided through Chapters 750 and 751 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1997 of the 1997 legislation regarding horse racing, including the \$500,000 provided for the Maryland Million in Chapter 748 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1997, the \$5,000,000 purse enhancement in Fiscal Year 1998 and the approximately \$1,000,000 of enhancements available from the reduction in the wagering tax provided in Chapter 750 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1997, and the approximately \$1,800,000 shift in annualized personnel costs from the racetracks to the State provided in Chapter 751 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1997; and

(iii) Market survey research and strategies, which are to be conducted in partnership with the horse racing industry (i.e., a consortium of track owners, breeders, trainers, and others); and taking into consideration the findings of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association's research related to Laurel Park and horse racing in Maryland and throughout the nation and any strategies that the association might develop and the findings of the Rosseroft Raceway Marketing Association Report as well as any marketing plans prepared for Ocean Downs Raceway; with the cooperation of the industry partnership described under subsection (b) of this section;

(iv) Public-private partnership possibilities; and

(2) Of the remaining amount:

(2) \$150,000 shall be used by the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Business and Economic Development, and the Maryland Stadium Authority, to contract with a private investment banking firm for a financial investment study of the horse racing industry in the State, specifically in regard to:

(i) The economic value of the racetracks in the State;

(ii) Whether private sources of equity funding are available for investment in the tracks and in the off-track betting facilities;

(iii) The feasibility of constructing a new racing facility to centralize thoroughbred and harness racing in the State;

(iv) The advantages and disadvantages of merging Pimlico Race Course and Laurel Park into one corporation;

(v) The capital improvement needs at the existing racetracks; and

(vi) (v) Whether the financial arrangements of the off-track betting system and the Intertrack wagering system in the State are conducive to the financial health of the horse racing industry as a whole;