



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

LEGISLATIVE COMMENT

DATE: March 8, 2016 BILL NO.: 815

SUBJECT: HORSE RACING FAIR HILL- ARABIAN BREED RACING AUTHORIZATION

COMITTEE: HOUSE WAYS & MEANS

MDA POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION:

This bill authorizes a licensee at the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area to conduct live racing of Arabian breed horses if the purse for an Arabian breed race is funded by the licensee or the sponsor of the race, specified takeout provisions apply, the licensee pays specified taxes and fees, and the race is approved by the Maryland Racing Commission (MRC). An Arabian breed horse is a horse that is a purebred Arabian breed horse and has a valid certificate of registry with the Arabian Jockey Club of America.

COMMENT:

Maryland's Horse Industry Board currently promotes equestrian activities and the use of horses for recreation through promotional activities that create awareness and visibility for the equine industry, educational and research projects to benefit the equine industry, and developmental efforts, such as job training programs, facilities planning and export marketing to stimulate the growth of the local horse economy. Currently housed within the Department of Agriculture this strong advising partnership continues to grow.

HB 815 and other horse racing bills promote and raise the level of public awareness of Maryland's equine traditions. The Arabian horse breed has a long standing history here in Maryland with the breed's first race on a parimutuel track at Laurel Park in 1959. Allowing additional breeds and racing events to occur at Fair Hill will bring extra awareness to Maryland's strong and growing equine industry.

MDA WOULD REQUEST A FAVORABLE VOTE FOR HB 815.