

November 6, 2023

Chair John Lively
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Lively, and Members of the Gambling Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the importance of horse racing to Oregon and to the communities in which they occur. We would like the Committee to take away from our presentations and letter that we support these racing events in every way possible. We support the community of agencies, veterinarians, trainers, riders, and staff that make these wonderful events successful. As important, we support the safety of the horse and jockeys that participate in these events. Without them, we would not be able to hold these events that now have occurred over a span of 100 years.

Moreover, both the thoroughbred and quarter horse racing events are an important part of Oregon's agri-business economy and job structure. The racing industry contributes over \$100 million annually to the state's economy and provides an estimated 2,000 plus Oregon jobs.

The horseracing industry's attributes are:

1. Good economic value to Oregon - estimated to be over \$100 million annually.
2. Steady employment to those involved - 2,000 + people.
3. Excellent community participation and entertainment.
4. Well regulated industry by the Oregon Racing Commission
5. Ancillary economic activities include veterinarians, farriers, tack shops, feed stores, hay growers, hay trucking companies, and so on.

These important events would not happen without the professionalism and commitment of the Oregon Racing Commission. Its purpose is to regulate all aspects of the industry from the wagering public to the integrity of the race itself. Horsemen and horsewomen, trainers groomers, veterinarians, track announcers, racetrack employees, stewards and many others are all licensed and regulated by the ORC. The State Veterinarian examines each horse prior to its being allowed to run in each race. The Commission licenses all off track wagering establishments and all advance deposit wagering platforms and all their employees. Oregon is the national gold standard in licensing throughout the horse racing and wagering industry.

Our organization is asking this committee to support an amendment to any committee bill that may be offered for the short session. The language changes the fund distribution of money deposited into the state collected from the Advanced Deposit Wagering program. Currently, in statute, ORC gets 75% of those funds and the State's General Fund Account receives 25%. The drafted language we are proposing would keep the 75% to the ORC but would redirect the 25%

to the ORC specifically to address the safety of the horses racing in the event and the jockeys riding those horses. The financial impact would be between \$800,000 to \$1,000,000. These funds would be used to hire additional vets, conditioning the track, adequate space, and condition of horse stalls, first aid for the jockeys and adequate quarters for the jockeys to prepare for the race.

We would ask the committee to support this statutory change and we would also ask the chair and members of this committee to include it into any committee bill the committee approves.

Sincerely,

Dave and Leah Nelson

