

Submitter: Laura Walker
On Behalf Of: Oregon Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Assoc.
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1524

Dear Chair and Members of the Oregon Senate Finance and Revenue Committee,

I am writing to respectfully urge your support for legislation that provides sustainable funding for Oregon's horse racing industry. This industry is not simply about sport — it is a vital part of Oregon's rural economy, agricultural community, and small business ecosystem.

Horse racing in Oregon supports a broad network of jobs and industries, including trainers, breeders, veterinarians, farriers, feed suppliers, transportation providers, hospitality workers, and agricultural producers. These are hardworking Oregonians whose livelihoods depend on a functioning and competitive racing environment. Without strategic state support, Oregon risks losing these jobs — and the economic activity they generate — to neighboring states that have made meaningful investments in their racing industries.

Beyond direct employment, horse racing sustains farmland preservation and agricultural use across the state. The industry incentivizes keeping land in productive use rather than development, protecting open spaces and supporting Oregon's longstanding agricultural heritage. For many rural communities, racing meets are significant economic drivers that bring tourism, fill hotels, support restaurants, and generate local tax revenue.

States that have chosen to invest in their racing industries have seen measurable returns through increased wagering revenue, tourism growth, and expanded breeding programs. With thoughtful funding and oversight, Oregon can strengthen its competitive position while maintaining transparency and fiscal responsibility.

Without this much needed new funding source, 2026 is likely the last year Horse racing will ever be held in Oregon due to the continued revenue streams being eliminated by the Oregon Legislature (such as no wagering on sites that allow betting on greyhound racing).

I respectfully ask that you consider the broader economic and community impact when evaluating this bill. Supporting Oregon horse racing is not merely an investment in an event — it is an investment in rural families, small businesses, agricultural land stewardship, and economic resilience.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Laura Lynn Walker

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