

Good Morning Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil and Distinguished Members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee.

My name is Debbie Patterson, I am the Executive Director for the Maine Harness Horsemen's Association. I am speaking to you today in favor of LD1611 An Act to Amend Maine's Harness Racing Laws Regarding Race Dates and Pari Mutual Pools.

I have had the honor of working for the MHHA for almost 6 years. In this time the industry has been on a rollercoaster ride of insecurity. A lot of people have worked hard over the past few years to move the industry forward. On February 8, 2021, the Maine State Harness Racing Commission licensed First Tracks Investments, LLC. They will be conducting their inaugural meet at the Cumberland Fairgrounds this year. This is an exciting new beginning for racing in Southern Maine. With leasing a fair track to hold a commercial meet there are bound to be obstacles that are out of any one's control. LD1611 will help in this most important transition. There are two key factors that will be taken into consideration. The first is based on live race days required. We have learned in the last 18 months that flexibility is a necessity. Adjusting the required days needed to be considered a commercial track will help build a better business model. It will allow the racing community to concentrate on putting together a calendar that will make the industry the most successful with possibly less days and fuller fields. Paired with that is the second part of LD1611. Growing the industry by reaching new fans. By allowing First Tracks to simulcast at a location within 25 miles from the track its operating. Passing LD1611 gives this new track the ability to start off on the right foot toward the path of success.

Thank you for your time.

Debbie Patterson

MHHA