

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky, Chairwoman
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2020

Dear Chairwoman Schakowsky and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers,

As former chairmen of the Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI), we are proud to count ourselves among the supporters of the Water Hay Oats Alliance. We join each other in praise of the Alliance's stance against drugs in horse racing and its efforts to create a path toward national uniformity by embracing HR 1754, the Horse Racing Integrity Act.

We are convinced that national uniform drug regulations are simply unachievable under our current fragmented regulatory structure. It is critical that our sport implement the highest of standards which would then translate to a racing product that has the greatest level of integrity. In our sport, winning is the reward for hard work. Without the elements of fairness and the uncompromising protection of the horse, the victories are meaningless.

It is now time to move forward. Horse racing relies on the major economic input of two sources ... the gambling customer and the race horse owner. We owe it to our customers to provide them with a uniform product which is beyond reproach, and we owe the race horse owner the opportunity to safely and fairly compete. Along those lines, the results of recent Daily Racing Form survey of fans are quite telling. When asked – "Do you believe that states are currently effective in catching trainers or veterinarians who are using illicit drugs?" – 78% responded "no" while only 16% responded "yes." By a similar margin - 64% to 22% - respondents favor the passage of the Horseracing Integrity Act.

We have heard every conceivable excuse in the world as to why a horse must be drugged on race day to compete. Choose any name you wish, Lasix, Salix, or Furosemide, they are all the same, and they are a performance enhancing drug given to horses just hours before the starting gate. Opponents contend Lasix is needed to combat internal bleeding in horses. However, research has shown that the drug is also a performance-enhancer, likely the major reason that over 90% of horses racing in America today receive Lasix on race-day, when it is estimated that only 5% of horses actually require the drug.

The current rules and standards governing the horse racing industry have long disregarded values of fairness and safety. During training and even on race day, racehorses are pushed to their breaking point by performance enhancing drugs, which currently go undetected by the industry's inadequate drug testing program. This frequent trend has become the largest concern among fans and advocates like us. This trend continues to put the longevity of the sport we love at serious risk. We owe it to our customers to provide them with a uniform product which is beyond reproach, and we owe the racehorse owner the opportunity to safely and fairly compete. Above all else, we owe it to the wellbeing of the horses and jockeys that make our sport possible.

For these reasons, we are proud to join the grassroots movement embodied by Water Hay Oats Alliance. We support the passage of HR 1754, the Horseracing Integrity Act. Our sport must move to prohibit the use of performance-enhancing drugs and appoint an independent anti-doping program run by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA).

We urge the distinguished members of the committee to join us in our effort to resolve the problem of widespread drug use in American racing and put U.S. racing jurisdictions in step with international standards.

Sincerely,

John Ward
Joe Gorajec
William Koester

cc:

Congressman Larry Bucshon, Congressman Michael C. Burgess, Congressman Tony Cardenas, Congressman Earl L. "Buddy" Carter, Congresswoman Kathy Castor, Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, Congressman Greg Giantforte, Congressman Brett Guthrie, Congressman Richard Hudson, Congresswoman Robin L. Kelly, Congressman Robert E. Latta, Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui, Congressman Jerry McNerney, Congressman Tom O'Halleran, Congressman Frank Pallone, Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester, Congressman Bobby Rush, Congressman Darren Soto, Congressman Fred Upton, Congressman Marc A. Veasey, Congressman Greg Walden