

Gabrielle Hume
3395 LeValley Rd
Columbiaville, MI 48421
Resident of House District 82

To: Michigan House Agriculture Committee

Honorable Julie Alexander (Chair) and members Mike Mueller, Beau LaFave, Michele Hoytenga, Gary Eisen, Pauline Wendzel, Brian Elder, Kevin Coleman, Alex Garza, Cynthia Johnson, Angela Witwer:

and Committee clerk Dakota Soda:

To: 2019-HIB 5239 Sponsors: Honorable Hank Vaupel, Eric Leutheuser, Tommy Brann, Gary Howell:

With all due respect to all honorable committee members and those representatives that have sponsored 2019-HIB 5239, I offer my comments.

What exactly IS the horse industry in Michigan?

- Horses used for 3-4 months of the year at Mackinac Island?
- Horses used in Amish communities for transportation and farming?
- Horse breeders?
- Horses used by youth and adults in competitions for ribbons and small monetary prizes (under \$1000)?
- State/DNR-operated riding stables?

What exactly needs to be promoted and to whom?

My past 30 or more years of experience with equine activities in Michigan have led me to realize that the majority of horse owners in this state own horses for recreational purposes. I would suggest that less than one-half of those owners use their horses for any type of financial reward or prize recognition through competition. Quite a number of those recreational horses are used by youth participating in local 4H or regional horse shows - typically doing so on a tight budget. There is also a small group of horse owners who rescue and maintain facilities for unwanted horses and those who provide facilities (with required training and certifications) for therapeutic riding opportunities for veterans, mentally challenged children and adults, and physically impaired persons. And of course, those horses used in the carriage industries in at least 3 different cities; and the Amish communities that I am familiar with. I suspect with not significant profit.

In other words, I am doubtful that there is a significant number of equine operations in this state that require "promotion" as there is little profit in breeding, raising, and training horses.

This proposed regulation targets a majority to finance a VERY small minority. This is equivalent to asking all dog owners in the state to pay an additional tax on dog food plus an additional fee on rabies vaccinations, that will be used to promote a "Not all Pit Bulls are Bad" campaign in Detroit. And, the "commission" would be persons who are high-dollar dog breeders.

Section 7.(2) This proposed regulation also imposes an unwarranted administrative and financial management burden that Vet offices will have to pass on to clients - most likely - equine clients, thereby imposing a secondary "tax" on horse owners when they must comply with a state regulation for EIA testing. The small percentage of money allowed as a holdback doesn't compensate these businesses for the additional administrative requirements.

Gabrielle Hume
3395 LeValley Rd
Columbiaville, MI 48421
Resident of House District 82

When I spoke with my veterinarian, Dr. Ralph Huff, he wants nothing to do with it. He and his children are all MSU graduates and he frequently has MSU Vet students accompany him on farm calls for all animals. Dr. Huff is a loyal and dedicated veterinarian – like so many others in the state.

When I looked at how this legislation could / would be enforced, I realized that the amount of money raised could well be used up in uncompensated manpower hours of enforcement (Sec 8 (a), (b), (c), (d), and court costs (d), (e). I suspect that the director's resources would be better spent on health and safety - not on accruing funds to benefit a small number of citizens.

Furthermore: there are two state-wide "organizations" within Michigan to promote equines: The first is the 501(c)3 non-profit Michigan Horse Council which claims "Promoting and Protecting the Horse Industry Since 1973" yet has failed repeatedly (witness the loss of horse breeding incentives which paid county fair participants in 4H programs; the loss of horse breeding for racing interests; the loss of horse racing; and no active involvement with land management for trails, zoning, etc.)

The second organization is the DNR-hosted Michigan Trails Advisory Council's Equine Trails Subcommittee which was also charged with developing other equine activities - which was attempted but not fulfilled due to a lack of cooperation/ participation with other entities although that effort was supported by State resources.

Additionally, there are many volunteer non-profit organizations in this state that do very worthwhile efforts to promote safe and healthy horse / equine practices.

A new commission with the authority proposed in 2019-HIB 5239 is perceived by many to be an attempt to gather money from the majority of horse owners in the state and spend it on a few activities that may benefit a VERY small minority. I have read, and agree with, the statements made by Ms. Kristie Walls to your committee.

My hope is that all of you will recognize that this bill proposes no benefit to the citizens of Michigan nor to any non-existent "equine industry" of Michigan and allow it to die in committee.

Most sincerely,

Gabrielle Hume

810-705-0172

Email: levalleyvista@earthlink.net

past VP of Back Country Horsemen of Michigan
past committee member of MTAC-Equine Trails Subcommittee
past association secretary for Great Lakes Reined Cow Horse Association
past 4H and Equestrian High School coach