

Created in 1933 by Chapter 55 Laws of Washington

Presentation to WA Senate Business, Financial Services and Trade Committee

January 22, 2025

Statutory Authority

- Regulates pari-mutuel horse racing under authority of the Racing Act, Chapter 67.16 RCW
- Advance Deposit Wagering, RCW 67.16.260
- Live Horse Racing Compact, Chapter 67.16 RCW
- Rules and regulations promulgated by the WHRC are codified in Title 260 WAC.

Statutory Responsibility, Mission and Goals

Statutory Responsibility

RCW 67.16.101 Legislative finding—Responsibilities of horse racing commission—

The legislature finds that:

(1) A primary responsibility of the horse racing commission is the encouragement of the training and development of the equine industry in the state of Washington whether the result of this training and development results in legalized horse racing or in the recreational use of horses;

(2) The horse racing commission has a further major responsibility to assure that any facility used as a race course should be maintained and upgraded to insure the continued safety of both the public and the horse at any time the facility is used for the training or contesting of these animals;

Mission

The mission of the WHRC is to regulate pari-mutuel horse racing and support the development of the equine industry in the state of Washington.

Goals

1. Foster a regulatory environment that promotes the economic benefits of the equine industry.
2. Ensure that the public has confidence in the integrity of pari-mutuel horse racing.

Agency Overview

Three voting members appointed by the Governor		
Douglas Moore Commission Chair	**Robert Lopez** Commissioner	**Dr. Claude Ragle, DVM** Commissioner

Four non-voting legislative ex-officio members	
Senator **DEREK STANFORD**	Senator **PHIL FORTUNATO**
Representative **JOE SCHMICK**	Representative **CHRIS STEARNS**

The Commission appoints an **Executive Secretary** who appoints staff and manages day-to-day operations

Regulatory Presence

Washington Horse Racing Commission

Commissioners

- Douglas Moore (Chair)
- Robert Lopez
- Dr. Claude Ragle

Ex Officio Members

- Sen. Phil Fortunato
- Rep. Chris Stearns
- Sen. Derek Stanford
- Rep. Joe Schmick

Ann-Kathrin Zemann
Deputy Secretary
#82

Amanda Benton
Executive Secretary
#4

Melanie Bowdish
Confidential Secretary
#8

Yvonne Doll
Racing Official II
#50

Aarika Nelson
Racing Official II
#45

Marlene Spencer
Racing Official II
#30
On Call

Francis Martin
Racing Official I
#31
On Call

TBD
Racing Official I
#21
On Call

Vacant
Class C Investigator II
#65

Vacant
Class C Fingerprint Tech II
#46

Darrell Farwell
Investigator III
#49

Hugh Wales
Investigator II
#10

Dr. Ron Friedman
Equine Medical Director
#11

Dr. Colette Bergam
Veterinarian
#80

Dr. Bob Campbell
Backup Veterinarian
#77

Dr. Lutz Harfst
Backup Veterinarian
#78

Vacant
Backup Veterinarian
#79

Brenda Holmes
Veterinarian Specialist 2
#62

Richard Reamy
Truck Driver II
#63

Sheyenne Murphey
Vet Technician
#75
On Call

Vet Assistant
16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43

Board of Stewards (Emerald Downs)

Dan Bryson
Steward
#29

Vacant
Presiding Steward
#25

Vince Funk
Steward
#9

Ken Peery
Racing Official II
#22

Robert Sodergren
Racing Official I
#44

Vacant
Racing Official II
#53

Jody Parmenter
Racing Official II
#47

Vacant
Racing Official I
#48

Chloe Miller
Racing Official I
#31

D.W. Smith
Steward
#05

Alexis Warner
Racing Official I
#51

Savannah Olguin
Racing Official I
#13

Class C Meets

TBD
Class C Presiding Steward
#28

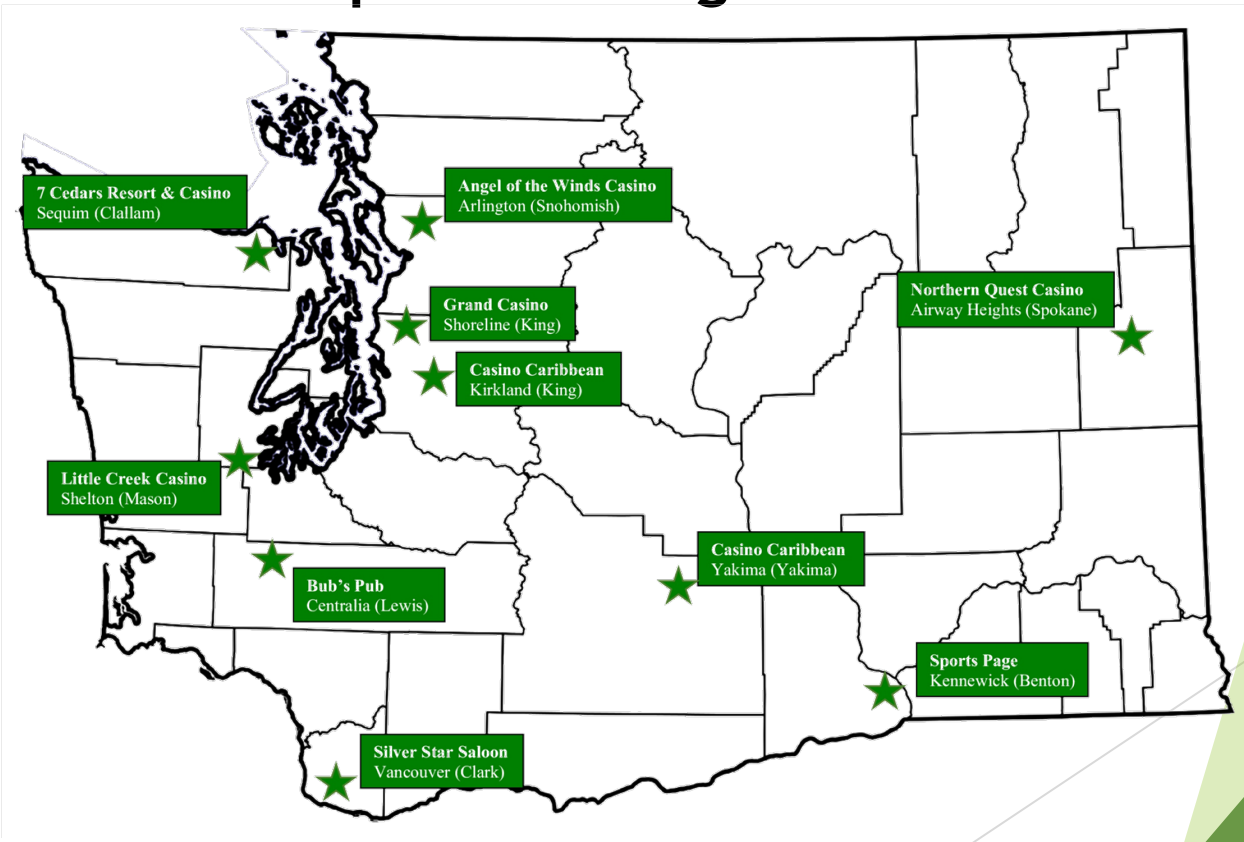
Racetracks and Off-Track Betting Locations

EMERALD DOWNS
Racetrack & Casino

Emerald Downs (Auburn)

51 days of racing
April 27, 2025 to
September 7, 2025

Map of Washington OTBs



Accounts Managed

- **Owners' Bonus** – RCW 67.16.102(1) & RCW 67.16.275
- **Class C Purse** – RCW 67.16.105(3) & RCW 67.16.285
- **WHRC Operating** – RCW 67.16.105(2) & RCW 67.16.280
- **Donohue Fund** – RCW 67.16.102(2)

Revenues –
WHRC Operating Account

The WHRC Operating Account is funded from:

- Pari-mutuel tax (1.803% of all monies wagered on live racing at Emerald Downs and OTBs)
- License fees (All persons participating directly in horse racing)
- Source Market Fee (6% of total source market fees from Advance Deposit Wagering)

Performance Measures

Measuring the health of horse racing

	Live Race Days	In-state Wagers	Horses per Race
1999	123	$ 158,454,428	8.13
2004	110	$ 136,467,998	7.10
2009	110	$ 114,383,570	7.30
2014	79	$ 77,971,391	6.30
2019	67	$ 72,722,075	6.77
2024	55	$ 46,905,442	6.45

Performance Measures

Horse Racing Industry Participation

	2014	2019	2021	2024
Owners/Prospective Owners	1,234	1,269	811	853
Trainers/Assistant Trainers	158	166	109	114
Grooms	182	216	215	217
Exercise & Pony Riders	218	233	192	199
Jockeys/Apprentice Jockeys	63	56	43	43

Performance Measures

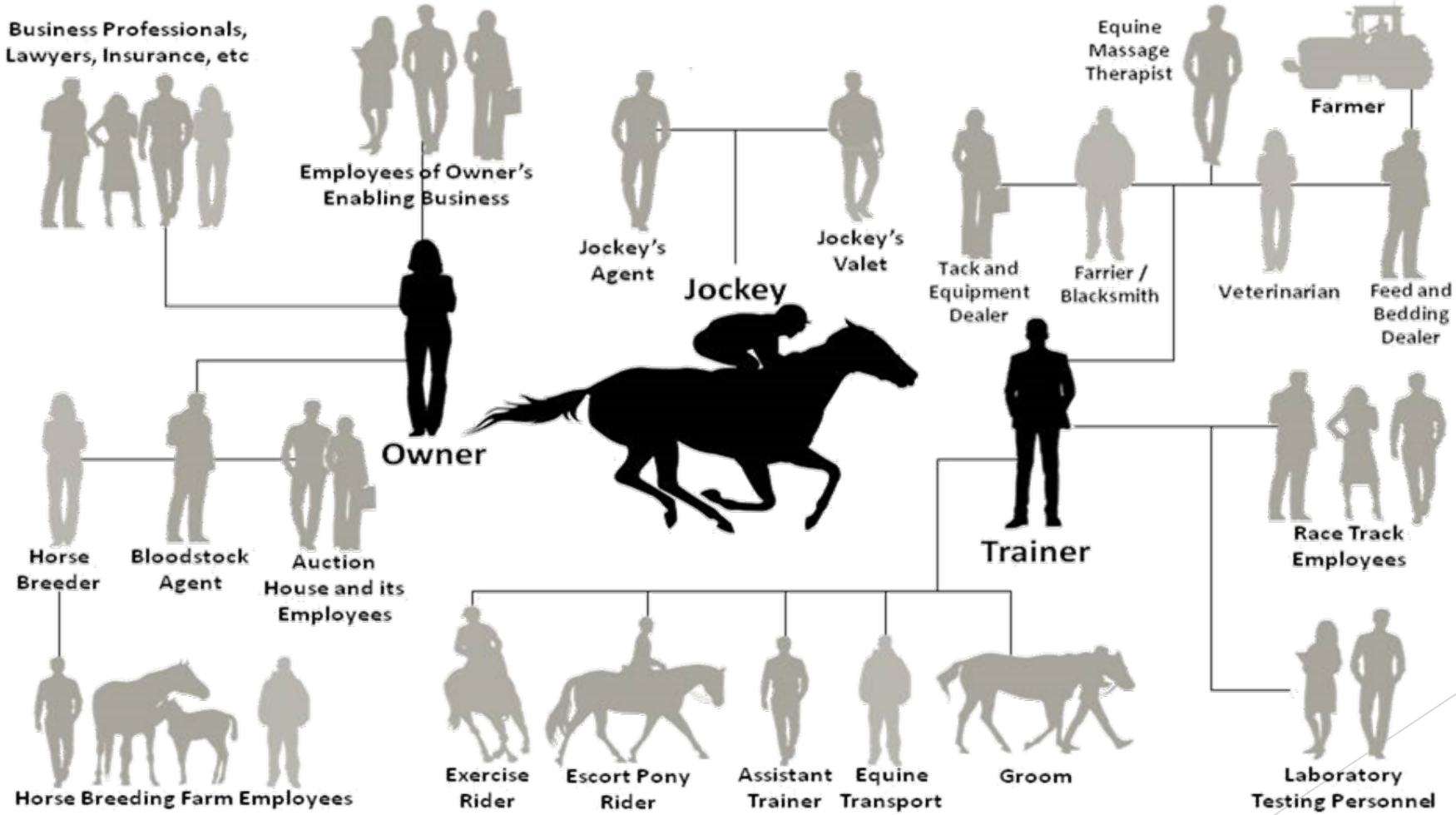
Washington-bred Owners and Breeders Awards

	WA Bred Owners Awards	WA Bred Breeders Awards	Annual WA Bred Foal Crop
1999	$ 1,574,339	$ 787,169	1,021
2003	$ 1,413,187	$ 859,047	763
2007	$ 1,513,805	$ 961,590	625
2011	$ 463,440	$ 377,485	337
2015	$ 539,013	$ 355,845	260
2018	$ 509,412	$ 175,629	181
2022*	$ 410,160	$ 210,755	127

*2022 is the latest Foal Crop data available from The Jockey Club

Impact of Horse Racing -
Who Does One Racehorse Employ?

Just a few of the many people employed by just ONE racehorse.



Impact of Horse Racing – Estimated Direct and Indirect Economic Contribution

	Emerald	Horse Owners	Breeders	Total
Salaries and Wages	$11,077,864	$16,800,744	$8,580,000	$36,458,608
Payments to Other Industries	$12,671,324	$8,114,213	$4,905,210	$25,690,747
Payments to Government Agencies	$4,409,388	$1,502,343	$2,484,478	$8,396,209
Annual Cash Outflows Total	**$28,158,576**	**$26,417,299**	**$15,969,688**	**$70,545,563**
Investment Value	$ 86,686,592	$ 16,057,800	$58,949,472	**$ 161,693,864**
Total Direct and Indirect Annual Economic Contribution to the State of Washington				**$ 240,497,351***

This study was conducted in 2019 and updated in 2022 Emerald Downs Racing LLC.
*Indirect economic impact based on 3.5 multiplier for visitor's expenses based on a study by Seattle-King County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Federal Oversight

Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act

- Congress passed a bill authorizing the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA) as a private self-regulatory organization. HISA develops rules related to horseracing, including anti-doping, medication control and racetrack safety.
- The Horseracing Integrity and Welfare Unit was established in partnership with DFSI, administers the rules and enforcement mechanisms of HISA's ADMC Program. HIWU oversees testing, educates stakeholders on the new system, accredits laboratories, investigates potential integrity violations and prosecutes rule breaches.
- HISA's 2025 operating budget is over $81 million, and the horseracing industry is assessed fees to cover this cost. Washington's 2025 assessment fee is $712,425 with potential credits for employing staff to operate the test barn lowering the expected direct fee to HISA to $424,775.
- In 2026, HISA's methodology for assessing fees will change to eliminate the consideration for purses paid and it is expected that Washington's assessment fee will be over $1.2 million.

HISA HORSERACING INTEGRITY AND SAFETY AUTHORITY

HIWU Horseracing Integrity & Welfare Unit

Agency Request Legislation

- HB 1327 Concerning Horse Racing
  - This is a regulatory clean-up bill
  - Creates a consistency with fees and taxes assessed
  - Updates the laws to remove dated language and better align them with technology advances that society has experienced
  - Makes minor changes to the laws to better reflect the current industry business practices

Industry Challenges

- Federally mandated regulatory fees assessed by the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority
- Net receipts from pari-mutuel wagering are down
  - 1994 Net Receipts was $31 million*
  - 2023 Net Receipts was $19.8 million*

    *Gambling net receipts reported by Gambling Commission
- Loss of horse racing industry participants

Washington Horse Racing Commission

Questions?







