

Horse racing organizations pursuing new track for thoroughbred racing in Massachusetts

Final Season at Suffolk Downs Starts June 9th for the Belmont Stakes Weekend

As Suffolk Downs turns the corner and heads into its 73rd and final racing season in East Boston, owners of the track and the two leading racehorse organizations in Massachusetts have agreed to jointly pursue legislation that will restructure current laws affecting horse racing in Massachusetts and develop a new thoroughbred horse racing facility to succeed Suffolk Downs.

In addition to the June 9 & 10 live racing weekend, Suffolk Downs has also applied for racing weekends on July 7 & 8 and August 4 & 5. Additional dates may also be sought. All racing weekends will include a Festival with live music and food trucks in partnership with the NEHPBA.

The three organizations have jointly executed a Memorandum of Understanding between the New England Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, Inc. (NEHBPA), the Massachusetts Thoroughbred Breeders Association (MTBA) and Sterling Suffolk Racecourse LLC, the owner of Suffolk Downs.

The Massachusetts Legislature has been reviewing current horse racing laws in the state, including simulcast rights and the future disposition of the Race Horse Development Fund (RHDF), currently estimated at more than \$13 million. Those funds, replenished with revenues from the state's slot parlors and casinos, has been used to fund purses for thoroughbred and standardbred racing.

As part of the agreement, the parties will work together to identify and secure land for a new track facility that may also include related horse and equine activities. An expanded facility would support the Massachusetts breeding program while also supporting agriculture in Massachusetts such as hay farmers.

"We know even from the limited number of racing days in 2017 that this remains a popular activity that is also about jobs and tax revenues for Massachusetts," said NEHBPA President Anthony Spadea. "But we need to move forward on this now so that we have a racing season in 2019 after Suffolk Downs has shut down."