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Media Contact
Elaine Driscoll (MGC) 617-571-2964
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Massachusetts Gaming Commission Votes to Adopt Emergency Regulatory Amendments to Enhance the Health And Safety of Horse Racing Participants

Today the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) voted to approve emergency regulatory amendments pertaining to national best practices and operational standards for the state's thoroughbred horse racing industry. These proactive measures taken by MGC will support the highest standards in both health and safety as the horse racing industry prepares for the arrival of expanded gaming. In preparation for the 2013 racing season, MGC's Division of Racing continues to aggressively pursue new protocols, procedures and standards to ensure the utmost integrity and efficiency for horse racing in Massachusetts.

The adoption of these regulations by emergency ensures they will be in force prior to the mid-April opening of Suffolk Downs for training.

Today's vote initiates Phase II of the Racing Division's proposed regulatory reform. While Phase I focused on veterinary practices, medication, and drug testing reform, the focus of Phase II is primarily on safety equipment, operating procedures, and the running of the race. These amendments to existing rules now incorporate nationally-recognized best practices from the Racing Commissioners International Model Rules as they pertain to the health and safety of racing's participants. The newly proposed changes will address several critical matters including, but not limited, to:

- Amending language regarding specifications and use of the riding crop;
- Adopting model rule standards for safety helmets and vests for jockeys, exercise riders, and assistant starters;
- Amending the scale of weights for jockeys; and
- Eliminating heel traction devices on front horseshoes.

Many of these regulations have been already been in practice as "house policy" at Suffolk Downs in recent years.



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MGC's Director of Racing, Jennifer Durenberger, stated, "The adoption of these rules by the Commission will provide the necessary additional regulatory oversight for the health and safety of racing's participants while also bringing 205 CMR 4.00 in line with industry best practices. We look forward to moving this process forward as we welcome racing's Thoroughbred participants back to Massachusetts for the 2013 season."

MGC will also be seeking public comment on the regulations, which will soon be posted to MassGaming.com. MGC will also host a public hearing regarding these regulations in late April, as part of its ongoing regular administrative rule-making process.

As a result of the creation of the Race Horse Development Fund via the state's Gaming Act, the industry is positioned to benefit from purses enhanced by casino and slot gaming revenues. As a result, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission continues to pursue and adopt the nation's best practices to support the integrity of the state's racing industry as it prepares to co-exist with the casinos.

On May 20, 2012, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission assumed regulatory responsibility of the state's horse racing industry from the State Racing Commission. MGC's newly created Racing Division is now the lawful authority on all regulatory matters for the industry. In April 2012 and in preparation of the transfer of duties, MGC commissioned veteran racing and gaming consultants to conduct an independent and comprehensive overview of the current status of the state's racing industry. MGC also requested that the consultants outline critical next steps to prepare the industry for the arrival of expanded gaming.

About MGC

The mission of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission is to create a fair, transparent, and participatory process for implementing the expanded gaming law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in November, 2011. In creating that process, the Commission will strive to ensure that its decision-making and regulatory systems engender the confidence of the public and participants, and that they provide the greatest possible economic development benefits and revenues to the people of the Commonwealth, reduce to the maximum extent possible the potentially negative or unintended consequences of the new legislation, and allow an appropriate return on investment for gaming providers that assures the operation of casino-resorts of the highest quality. For more information on MGC, please visit MassGaming.com or connect and share on Twitter (@MassGamingComm) or Facebook (www.facebook.com/MAGamingComm).



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