



Legislative Services

June 29, 2023

Sent via email: premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Honourable and Dear Sir:

Re: Impact on Woodbine's Race and Stay Program on the Fort Erie Race Track

Please be advised the Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie passed the following resolution at its meeting of June 26, 2023:

Whereas the Fort Erie Race Track is one of only two thoroughbred horse racing facilities in the Province of Ontario, having been established in 1897 and operating continuously since then; and

Whereas in recent years, the Fort Erie Race Track has been the primary host facility for the "B" circuit of thoroughbred racing, while the Woodbine track in Toronto has been the primary facility for "A" circuit thoroughbred racing; and

Whereas both race tracks host "jewel" races in Ontario Triple Crown of Horse Racing; and

Whereas the Ontario Racing Commission, an agency created by the Government of Ontario, regulates horse racing; and

Whereas the provincial government has strategies and policies in place to develop and encourage the horse racing industry in Ontario, including funding and incentive programs to grow and expand the industry in the province; and

Whereas the Fort Erie and Woodbine Race Tracks are both beneficiaries of these programs; and

Whereas Woodbine Entertainment, the owners of the Woodbine track, adopted a stall policy in May 2017, referred to as "Race and Stay," that prevents horses from stabling at Woodbine if they leave to race at another track more than once, except for races with a purse of more than \$20,000; and

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Whereas The Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie passed a resolution on May 15, 2017, requesting that the Ontario Racing Commission immediately prohibit Woodbine Entertainment from implementing the Race and Stay program and limitations on the movement of horses between Woodbine and the Fort Erie Race Track; and

Whereas the Mayor and members of Fort Erie Council met with the Minister of Economic Development and Growth at the 2017 Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference to discuss the negative impacts of the Woodbine Race and Stay stall program on the Fort Erie Race Track; and

Whereas the Mayor and members of Fort Erie Council met virtually with officials with the Minister of Finance during the 2020 Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference to again discuss the Woodbine Race and Stay stall policy and the negative impacts it has on the Fort Erie Race track; and

Whereas the Mayor and members of Fort Erie Council met with the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance at the 2022 Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference to again discuss Woodbine's Race and Stay program and the negative impacts it continues to have on the Fort Erie Race Track; and

Whereas representatives of the Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium have launched a challenge with the Competition Bureau to determine whether Woodbine Entertainment's actions constitute an attempt to create an illegal monopoly; and

Whereas Woodbine's Race and Stay policy continues to remain in effect through the 2023 racing season; and

Whereas Woodbine's Race and Stay policy continues to have a devastating impact on the ability of the Fort Erie Race Track to operate successfully and grow Ontario horse racing under provincial objectives; and

Whereas the Fort Erie Race Track is a job creator in Fort Erie and the surrounding region, both directly and indirectly, and has contributed to the local economy as well as the history and culture of the area since 1897;

Now therefore be it resolved,

That: The Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie again requests that the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario immediately prohibit Woodbine Entertainment from continuing the Race and Stay stall policy; and further

That: The Provincial Government put in place a long-term policy to encourage competition and diversification of horse racing in Ontario that would prevent any single race track from using their market position to create an unfair monopoly on horse racing in Ontario, including but not necessarily limited to implementing policies that would prohibit monopolistic policies like Woodbine's Race and Stay; and further

That: The Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, Ontario Racing Commission and the Provincial Government recognize the contributions of the Fort Erie Race Track to the growth, history and culture of horse racing in the province of Ontario; and further

That: Staff circulate this resolution to the race tracks that host standard bred races and the municipalities that those race tracks reside in, including: Clinton Raceway and the Municipality of Central Huron, Dresden Raceway and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Flamboro Downs and the Municipality of Hamilton, Georgian Downs and the Municipality of Barrie, Grand River Raceway and the Municipality of Centre Wellington, Hanover Raceway and the Municipality of Hanover, Hiawatha Horse Park and the Municipality of Sarnia, Kawartha Downs and the Municipality of Cavan Monaghan, Leamington Raceway and the Municipality of Leamington, The Raceway at Western Fair and the Municipality of London, and Rideau Carleton Raceway and the Municipality of Ottawa, and;

That: Staff circulate this resolution to the Regional Council of Niagara and all local area municipalities within the Regional Municipality of Niagara for their endorsement and support.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards,



Ashlea Carter, AMP
Deputy Clerk

acarter@forterie.ca

AC:dlk

cc: The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Ontario Minister of Finance, Peter.Bethlenfalvy@pc.ola.org
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Lisa.Thompson@pc.ola.org
Marit Styles, Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition in Ontario, MStiles-QP@ndp.on.ca
John Fraser, Interim Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Green Party of Ontario, mschreiner@ola.org
Wayne Gates, MPP for Niagara Falls, WGates-QP@ndp.on.ca
Jeff Burch, MPP Niagara Centre, JBurch-QP@ndp.on.ca
Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario customer.service@agco.ca / inquiry@ontarioracingcommission.ca
The Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium jthibert@forterieracetrack.ca
Clinton Raceway jessicacarnochan@gmail.com
Municipality of Central Huron cao@centralhuron.com
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Municipality of Leamington clerks@leamington.ca
The Raceway at Western Fair telliott@westernfairdistrict.com
City of London csaunder@london.ca
Rideau Carleton Raceway - sent via mail
City of Ottawa Rick.Oconnor@ottawa.ca
Niagara Region and Local Area Municipalities