

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 6 FY 95/96
DATE February 12, 1996

**AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE MAINE
HARNESS RACING TASK FORCE**

WHEREAS, live harness racing and related businesses are an important part of the Maine economy and a vital part of Maine's long tradition of agricultural fairs;

WHEREAS, the current regulatory structure governing the harness racing industry was established years ago when the regulatory focus was agricultural fair racing and the proper care of horses;

WHEREAS, the advent of off-track betting and commercial racing has produced significant industry growth and shifted the focus of regulation to the complex issues presented by highly competitive commercial enterprises and gambling;

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources Maine Harness Racing Commission, the current regulator of the industry, is now forced to cope with economic regulation of race dates, off-track betting and other gambling related issues not primarily connected to the department's mission;

WHEREAS, a comprehensive review of the modern live harness racing industry and off-track betting is needed in order to assure that the State's regulatory structure is best designed to meet the challenges of this modern industry;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Angus S. King, Jr., Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Maine Harness Racing Task Force:

1. Purpose and Charge

The Task Force shall review the current status and future challenges to the industry and make recommendations to the Governor on how the State can most efficiently regulate the industry in order to support the health of the industry and related businesses, while protecting public health, safety and welfare. The Task Force shall make recommendations to the Governor on the following issues:

- a. A strategic plan to support the harness racing industry including both governmental and private initiatives, but designed to be accomplished within existing state resources;

and drivers and prevent corruption of race results;

- c. The most effective regulation of economic issues related to racing, including regulation of race dates, off-track betting and simulcasting in order to support the health of the industry, preserve the role of harness racing in the agricultural fairs, and protect the public interest;
- d. How to minimize the administrative costs of regulation and enforcement in all phases of harness racing while fully protecting the public health, safety, and welfare.

2. **Report**

The Task Force shall submit a final report to the Governor, President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of the 118th Legislature no later than February 15, 1997.

3. **Membership**

The Task Force may have up to fifteen members, representing government, agricultural fairs, commercial race tracks, off-track betting facilities, all sectors of the Maine equine industry, veterinarians, and the general public. The Commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, or his designee, shall serve as Chairman of the Task Force.

4. **Funding and Staff**

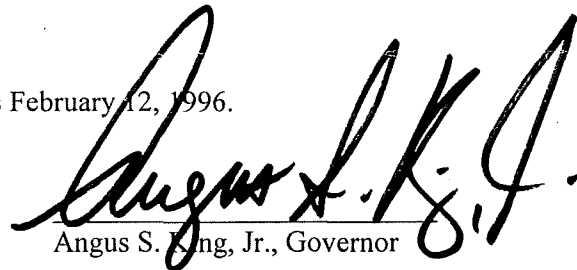
The Task Force will be supported, staffed and funded, within existing resources, by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources. The Attorney General and the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis shall be invited to appoint a designee to serve as a resource to the Task Force. Upon demonstration of need and within existing resources, the Task Force members may receive travel reimbursement for Task Force work, consistent with existing state policies.

5. **Meetings**

The Task Force will meet at least monthly.

6. **Effective Date**

The effective date of this Executive Order is February 12, 1996.



Angus S. King, Jr., Governor