



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Roy J. McDonald

Senator McDonald Attempts to Spur Senate Action Today on Bill to Protect Racing at Saratoga

ROY J. MCDONALD May 11, 2010

Albany - May 10, 2010 - McDonald says Bill would safeguard hundreds of racing industry, tourism-related jobs; but was defeated with a vote of 32 Democrats to 29 Republicans, for the second time in two weeks.

For the second time in a span of two weeks, Senator Roy McDonald offered an amendment today on the Senate floor in an attempt to force action on a bill that would provide the New York Racing Association (NYRA) with the short-term fiscal relief necessary to ensure uninterrupted summer racing season at the historic Saratoga Racetrack this year, as well as protect hundreds of tourism-related jobs in Saratoga and its surrounding communities.

However, Democrats voted down the amendment today, after defeating a similar amendment on April 26.

McDonald has urged the Senate leadership to take up the measure as soon as possible. The Governor's program bill was introduced nearly three weeks ago.

Under the McDonald amendment, NYRA would be permitted to borrow approximately \$17

million of the \$250 million reappropriation for capital works purposes at Saratoga, Aqueduct and Belmont Racetracks.

The legislation would provide NYRA with the fiscal relief necessary to shore up its finances, and ensure racing continues at Saratoga.

“With the perfect storm of problems facing New York racing, we need to take immediate action and provide solutions to ensure that the quality of racing is not impaired by a lack of action; our region depends on a successful summertime meet in Saratoga Springs,” said McDonald. “This proposal will provide NYRA with the necessary funding to compete with neighboring states so that the Saratoga Racing meet, in particular, can continue to be the best and most successful in the country. I would urge all Senators to support this amendment.”

NYRA would be required to repay the loan to the operator that is ultimately chosen to run the video lottery gaming facility at Aqueduct. This legislation, however, would have no impact on the State’s current financial situation since it does not authorize the expenditure of any new money. New York City OTB currently owes NYRA approximately \$17 million.

Meanwhile, after meeting with a group of concerned citizens and local business leaders Friday, Senator McDonald announced that possible legal action will be pursued if inaction continues on the selection of a VLT vendor at Aqueduct Racetrack and funding is not given to NYRA to ensure racing at Saratoga this summer. The lawsuit would likely include the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce and individual horsemen and breeders who have been affected by the delays.

The Preakness Stakes, the second leg of Horse Racing's Triple Crown, will be run Saturday at the Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore, Maryland. It will be followed by the NYRA-run Belmont Stakes, which takes place in Elmont, New York on June 5th. The Belmont Stakes is the third race in the Triple Crown series.

The Saratoga Racetrack, home of the Travers' Stakes, the oldest major thoroughbred horse race in the country, is located in the 43rd Senate District and is represented by Senator McDonald.

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