



180 Fitch Road, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
(518) 587-3426 • Fax (518) 587-4393  
e-mail: [office@mcmahonthoroughbreds.com](mailto:office@mcmahonthoroughbreds.com)  
[www.mcmahonthoroughbreds.com](http://www.mcmahonthoroughbreds.com)

January 16, 2017

**Senate Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering  
WITNESS RESPONSE INFORMATION: HEARING TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE OF THE  
NEW YORK RACING ASSOCIATION**

My name is Joe McMahon and I am appreciative of this opportunity to address the panel. I have been involved in the thoroughbred horse business since the mid-sixties. I, along with my wife Anne, purchased a farm in 1970. Since that time we have raised well over a thousand racehorses which have gone on to win numerous Stakes races, including the Kentucky Derby in 2003, won by a horse who many of you may remember Funny Cide.

Breeders in New York have proved that they can raise a top horse, our racing facilities are the best in the world, we have a large and energetic fan base, and horse sales have risen precipitously over the past 5 years. New York is looing bright or one would think so...maybe not.

Professional horse people from around the country know how good it is in New York, but there is something holding the industry back. There are farms, breeders, and owners around the country who are ready to invest big money in New York. They want to build farms, buy more horses, and most of all create jobs. But there is a lingering concern that politics could threaten what has become a vibrant industry for the state.

People are reluctant to invest in bricks and mortar in New York because they don't feel that the state government is their partner. Negative events of the last several years, including the state government control of NYRA, which was supposed to last only 2 years has dragged on almost 4 years, is likely the

biggest cause for mistrust. Although a backroom deal which robbed tens of millions of dollars from the racing industry has and will cause more mistrust when its impact becomes clear later this year. Other problems include:

1. Persistent talk of closing Aqueduct without another stated plan for winter racing.
2. A failed legislative proposal to curb the ever-escalating cost of racetrack insurance.
3. The total disregard for racing at Finger Lakes Racetrack over casino gambling is destabilizing the western New York racing industry.

It is perfectly clear no matter what industry you are in, business people do not do well when there is uncertainty and an environment lacking in trust. There needs to be a long-term commitment that the state will be a good partner with racing. I cannot overstate the potential of breeding and racing in New York. We have world-class facilities, we have the biggest population of people who like to gamble on horse racing, and we have the largest purses...Why don't we build on that? Why don't we take that position and use it? If the industry is going to survive and prosper in New York, there needs to be a long term plan.

We need to have positive news to show people that New York has a plan that is free of politics. Racing needs to be treated like the great business it is, not left to wither and die like most of the factories in New York State. The legislature must act now to fix it. How to fix it?

1. Involve all stakes holders in the process at NYRA at board level with full voting privileges.
2. Immediately get New York State government out of the racing industry – the state should be a nurturing force not an obstacle.
3. Reprivatizing NYRA now!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. I can be reached on my cell at (518) 376-2922 or at my office (518) 587-3426. Thank you.