



## PUBLIC PROTECTION CABINET

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### **Horse Racing Task Force Issues Report, Makes Recommendations to Address Issues Facing Industry** *Chair says Kentucky must act swiftly*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 15, 2008)** – The Governor’s Task Force on the Future of Horse Racing today completed its work, approving a final report that Task Force chair Tracy Farmer called, “an excellent blueprint to begin the process of once again being able to proclaim Kentucky as The Horse Capital of the World.”

Gov. Beshear formed the task force in July and charged it with making recommendations on the long-term health, integrity and competitiveness of Kentucky’s signature industry. In the ensuing months, the 12-member panel has examined issues such as the economic soundness of the equine industry, the integrity of horse racing, the staffing and budget needs of the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission (KHRC), and the prospects for locating a world-class equine testing laboratory in Kentucky.

The more than 60-page report includes recommendations from four subcommittees that heard testimony and gathered information from a variety of industry experts over a four-month period. Those recommendations include finding alternative sources of revenue to increase the purses offered at Kentucky’s tracks in order to make them competitive with competing states. The report notes that states such as Maryland and Pennsylvania have or will soon be dramatically increasing their purses well beyond those at Kentucky’s tracks. In both of these cases, expanded gaming in those states has provided the revenue to help make that happen.

The report also recommends increasing the staffing at the KHRC in order to address integrity issues within the sport. Under the proposal, ten new positions would be filled including track stewards, investigators and a racing veterinarian. This would bring Kentucky more in-line with other racing states and address recommendations made by the Auditor of Public Accounts, which noted in 2006 the lack of adequate funding and staffing for the KHRC.

Other recommendations include the construction of a state-owned testing lab. This, according to the report, would lead to quicker test results that have tighter controls and the potential for reduced costs and the ability to organize research activity.