

Testimony of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland

Presented by Mark Stewart, General Counsel

In SUPPORT of SB 878

Budget and Tax Committee Hearing

February 28, 2024

On behalf of The Cordish Companies and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland, I respectfully submit this written testimony **in support** of SB 878, which calls upon additional forms of gambling authorized by the State (the Lottery, sports betting and fantasy sports) to contribute their share to efforts combatting problem gambling. Even more importantly, SB 878 recognizes the vital need for a comprehensive prevalence study dedicated specifically to mobile gambling in Maryland.

Early in the days of casino gaming in Maryland, the General Assembly showed great foresight in forming the Maryland Alliance for Responsible Gaming (MARG). Through MARG, the Senate, the House of Delegates, the Department of Health, all the State's casinos and other stakeholders have worked collaboratively and consistently to combat problem gambling. Regulations and procedures were put in place to require safeguards against problem and underage gambling at in-person casinos, including prohibitions on gambling with credit cards, prohibitions on gambling while drunk or under the influence, strict ID checking protocols, and more.

Maryland only has one year of mobile sports betting under its belt. While the Maryland Center of Excellence has reported that it is already seeing major increases in call volumes and problems among young people, the Center has explained that the State does not yet have the data to know the full scope of the problem that may be facing Marylanders. It takes time for problem gambling behavior to manifest itself, people to accept that they have a problem and, ultimately, to seek help from the Center or a 1-800 Helpline. SB 878 (and HB 1029) rightly calls for a comprehensive mobile gambling prevalence study based upon multiple years' worth of data to be completed by July 1, 2029. **Until that study is completed and its results understood, the State should slow down and hit the pause button on any consideration of additional online**

gambling expansion – whether in the form of iGaming or iLottery, where slot machines, casino games and slot-like Lottery games are added to everyone’s smartphone.

We support public policy being based on strong data analysis and urge the Committee to favorably report out SB 878. Thank you.