

The developer of Maryland's largest casino has filed a \$600 million lawsuit against the racetrack operators that fought his development, claiming an extensive conspiracy to "destroy" the casino and the company's reputation. Baltimore's Cordish Cos. and two subsidiaries say the "illicit campaign" by the Maryland Jockey Club and the Laurel and Pimlico

racetrack owners to halt its planned casino at the Arundel Mills mall cost millions in legal fees and image damage.

The complaint filed in Baltimore on Tuesday levels charges of conspiracy, defamation and wrongful interference against the jockey club, track owners Penn National Gaming and MI Developments, and others. Among the charges, Cordish says his opponents -- who want a casino at Laurel -- twisted the truth and used a \$7 million contract dispute between an Indiana racetrack and a Cordish subsidiary to defame the Baltimore company.

Indiana Downs Chairman Ross Mangano "worked with" Cordish opponents and used the dispute "to create false and unfavorable publicity," namely a television commercial that ran in Washington and Baltimore that said "voters can't trust the Cordish Company to deliver," the complaint said.

The commercial aired last fall, when Anne Arundel County voters were deciding on zoning for Cordish's casino.

A Penn National spokesman said the company doesn't comment on pending litigation. Tom Chuckas, jockey club president, called the lawsuit an effort to restrict free speech.

"As to the Cordish Companies' business in Indiana, we have no idea what they are talking about," he added.

Tuesday's suit is the latest development in what has been a litigious battle between Cordish and the racetrack operators, including a lawsuit that went to the Maryland Court of Appeals last year.

Much of the nearly two-year fight against Cordish's casino has been funded by the jockey club's various owners. Penn National, which bought a 49 percent stake in Maryland's tracks and the jockey club last summer, also operates Cecil County's casino.

Md. casino developer hits racetracks with defamation suit - Washington Examiner

Written by Administrator

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Sen. James DeGrange, D-Anne Arundel, [has proposed legislation](#) that seeks to squash such interference by slots licensees.

"I think this would certainly keep license holders doing what they're supposed to do -- which is raise money for the state," DeGrange said.

lfarmer@washingtonexaminer.com

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