



TOWN OF BERKLEY

MASSACHUSETTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

One North Main Street
Berkley, MA 02779

January 27, 2016

Mr. Steve Crosby, Chairman
Massachusetts Gaming Commission
101 Federal Street, 12th Floor
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Mr. Crosby:

As local officials in southeastern Massachusetts, we are writing to express our serious concerns about the Commission approving a fourth casino in Massachusetts. As you know, the Commonwealth has executed a pact for the construction of a casino in Taunton, said casino to be constructed by the Mashpee Wampanoags. That casino is to be located less than a mile from the Berkley town line. At the same time, we are aware that the Commission is considering granting a commercial license for a casino in nearby Brockton.

The implications posed by the construction of two competing casinos in Southeastern Massachusetts are significant for the region in general and the Town of Berkley in particular, and we are disappointed that, thus far, there has been no real dialogue between us to afford our town the opportunity to voice its concerns related to the impacts this will have on our residents and on municipalities in the region.

The Expanded Gaming Act only envisioned three destination resort casinos, one for each region in the state. The intent of the law was to spread the economic development benefits throughout the Commonwealth. The law was also designed, not just to fairly bestow the benefits, but to also equally divide the burdens and risks, such as traffic, crime and problem gambling. However, recent actions by the Gaming Commission indicate that Southeastern Massachusetts faces the very real and grave prospect of hosting not just one casino, but shouldering the burden of three - in Plainridge, Brockton and Taunton.

We believe that the combined impacts of having three gambling facilities in one region, compounded by the impact of additional casinos nearby in Rhode Island have yet to be fully studied.

The other regions of Massachusetts are experiencing a growing economy, but our region has fallen behind. Unemployment, poverty, drug addiction and crime are very serious issues in our communities. By saturating our area with a number of casinos, we fear that the costs may very well exceed the benefits, and that crime, public safety issues and traffic congestion will get much worse.

The Commission must also assess the impact that three casinos will have on our road system, especially the Route 24 corridor. Our residents are concerned that this highway could transform into a parking lot. Route 24 is already considered by State and local officials as a dangerous stretch of road. We currently have a crowded and degraded road network in our area and Mass DOT is struggling with a huge backlog. We do not believe the transportation system will be able to handle the additional traffic. It will be a huge burden to visitors, commuters and residents alike. We urge the Commission to study these issues and identify mitigation before it makes any further licensing decisions.

Finally, the Commission must create a pathway for all impacted towns to have access to the Gaming Commission's Community Mitigation Fund. Each casino operator, including the Mashpee tribe, will be contributing

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gaming revenues to the Community Mitigation Fund that was established for the benefit of all surrounding towns. But many have not been invited to participate in this process. Right now, the Commission is considering proposals from towns in the Brockton area. However, the towns of Berkley, Rehoboth, Dighton, Freetown, Lakeville, Raynham and Norton have not been invited to participate. We are anticipating that there will be added costs to these communities, including traffic, police, fire and rescue. It is our understanding of the tribal compact, that if an additional casino is licensed in this region, the Mashpee tribe is not required to contribute to the mitigation fund. On the surface, it appears that our communities are being left out due to the fact that the gaming commission does not anticipate a monetary tribal contribution. We would like to see the Commission take a more holistic approach in its decision making and look at the "big picture". We also have concerns and reservations that the state intends to use funds from the Community Mitigation Fund to assist all communities in the Commonwealth, not just the surrounding communities. It is our hope the Commonwealth will see the wisdom in assisting the most affected communities, as this was the intent of the establishment of this funding in the first place. We urge you to give full attention to our concerns, and to address them before any further licensing decision are considered.

Thank you and we look forward to increased dialog on this important topic in the weeks and months ahead.



George F. Miller
Chairman, Berkley Board of Selectmen



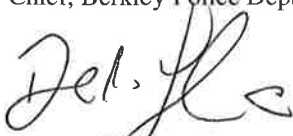
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