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## **The Massachusetts Gaming Commission Receives Public Safety Impact Reports After Eight Months of Full Operations at Encore Boston Harbor and 18 Months at MGM Springfield**

*Reports conclude “few patterns and trends so far have shown any direct casino ties”*

During a remote public meeting on March 25, 2021, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) was presented with **Public Safety Impact Reports** analyzing changes in police data after eight months of full operations at Encore Boston Harbor and 18 months of operations at MGM Springfield.

A legislative mandate requires the MGC to carry out an expansive and groundbreaking [research agenda](#) to understand the social and economic impacts of gambling in the Commonwealth, including the relationship between gambling and levels of crime.

MGC consultant and crime analyst **Christopher Bruce** conducted public safety research and analysis, building upon analysis from prior baseline reports and follow-up public safety reports related to Encore Boston Harbor and MGM Springfield.

The public safety report for Encore Boston Harbor reflects the property’s first eight months of operations, along with three months of closure for COVID-19, and three months of restricted reopening in 2020. Encore Boston Harbor drew more than **3.5 million** visitors during its first eight months of operations, and the study concluded that the facility’s overall effect on crime numbers in the region is “commensurate with a facility of that size hosting that many visitors.”

Related to Encore Boston Harbor, Mr. Bruce said, “In the surrounding areas, various crimes increased and decreased.” Mr. Bruce further noted, “Few patterns and trends so far have shown any direct casino ties, but this report flagged a handful for future monitoring.”

The public safety report for MGM Springfield reflects the property’s first 18 months of activity, plus three months of COVID-19-related closures. The study concluded that, while surrounding communities saw some increases and decreases in crime, there were “very few consistent trends to which MGM Springfield serves as a clear source.”

For MGM Springfield, Mr. Bruce said, “The report shows that only a few crimes increased in surrounding agencies during this period. While some of these increases have possible links to MGM, there is no general consistency across the surrounding agencies and very little definitive proof of a casino connection among specific offenders.”



Massachusetts Gaming Commission

## **A summary of findings from the Public Safety Impact Report for Encore Boston Harbor:**

- Overall violent, property, and total crime were within expected ranges for the region and most cities individually.
- A preliminary analysis of drunk driving evidence suggests that the casino may be responsible for a “small number” of drunk drivers on the road, with Encore Boston Harbor listed as the “last drink” location by seven drunk drivers adjudicated in 2019-2020.
- The immediate areas around the casino showed few increases in crimes or calls for service.
  - The major exception is an increase in traffic complaints in neighborhoods to the north and east of the casino, which could reflect patrons parking on local streets when the garage is full.

## **A summary of findings from the Public Safety Impact Report for MGM Springfield:**

- Issues most likely influenced by MGM Springfield include:
  - A “small” increase in drunk driving, with MGM Springfield appearing seven times as a “last drink location” amid drunk driver adjudications.
  - An increase in shoplifting and other crimes at 24-hour facilities in the immediate block of the casino.
  - Increases in traffic-related complaints in some communities and along State Police roads.
  - An increase in activity at Union Station in Springfield.
- There is, so far, “no sign” that the presence of the casino has increased crime or calls for service at hotels, restaurants, bars, and gas stations, nor has it increased activity specifically within the radiuses of highway exits to and from the facility.
- Other patterns identified in previous public safety reports did not continue into this period, including a residential theft-from-vehicle pattern in Springfield, East Longmeadow, and Longmeadow; suspicious activity and disturbance calls near the bridges in West Springfield; and domestic violence increases in several communities.

To view a copy of the full report for Encore Boston Harbor and all of its findings, click [here](#).

To view a copy of the full report for MGM Springfield and all of its findings, click [here](#).

### **About MGC Crime Analyst Christopher W. Bruce**

Christopher W. Bruce is an internationally-recognized expert in police data systems and police data analysis. He is a career crime analyst with previous service at the Cambridge Police Department and the Danvers Police Department. He was president of the Massachusetts Association of Crime Analysts from 2000 to 2004 and has served in several roles in the International Association of Crime Analysts. He currently serves as an assistant professor of criminal justice at Husson University in Bangor, Maine.



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