

ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

244 Fair St., P.O. Box 1800, Kingston, New York 12402

Telephone: 845-340-3800

Fax: 845-334-5724

MICHAEL P. HEIN

County Executive

ADELE B. REITER

Chief of Staff



ROBERT SUDLOW

Deputy County Executive

KENNETH CRANNELL

Deputy County Executive

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Mark D. Gearan
Chairman, New York State Gaming Commission
One Broadway Center
Schenectady, New York 12305

Kevin S. Law
Chairman, Gaming Facility Location Board
One Broadway Center
Schenectady, New York 12305

Gentlemen:

I write regarding the recent announcement by the Gaming Facility Location Board to recommend issuing three out of the four authorized gaming facility licenses.

First, I want to commend the Board for conducting an exhaustive analysis and weighing the inherent benefits of each application.

Recently, there has been a call to issue a new Request for Applications to seek a qualified applicant to submit a new bid for the remaining gaming facility license; I support this request. However, it is my strong belief, motivated by legislative intent and fairness, that the new round of applications includes the Catskills/Hudson Valley Region, not just the Eastern Southern Tier/Finger Lakes Region.

Voters approved casinos in Upstate New York due to the potential economic benefits for communities that needed it the most. The Catskills, with the golden age of the 1950's and 1960's gone and its tourist resorts long since shuttered, falls squarely within the intent of the gaming legislation. Additionally, the thoughtful decision to allow renovation of existing resorts instead of requiring only new construction gives further evidence of the designation of the Catskills as the premier targeted region for destination gaming.

In determining to recommend only one license to the Catskills/Hudson Valley Region the Board properly concluded that locating a gaming facility in Orange County would "cannibalize" gaming in the rest of the region and create an isolating barrier to Upstate for those traveling from

New York City. The potential of a casino in Orange County posed many pitfalls, including hampering the financing and ultimate success of other casinos in the region, which the Board correctly pointed out.

As real and daunting as these concerns were in Orange County they do not exist in Ulster County. In fact, now that the Board has chosen to recommend the Montreign Casino in Sullivan County, attention should be given to the complementary effects of siting a Casino in Ulster County. Visiting either the Nevele or the Montreign invites visitors into the heart of the Catskills and travelers would once again experience the Catskills as a world-class destination with diverse attractions. This gaming hub would create a gateway to all of Upstate New York.

This mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationship between resorts is not based in untested theory but rather in reality; between the 1950's and 1970's there were dozens of resorts in the Catskills that drew thousands of visitors each year. The presence of the Concord, Grossinger's or Kutcher's did not harm the Nevele, Tamarack Lodge or the Granit; in fact, it was the presence of so many resorts and choices that made the region a world-class vacation destination. Competition in the Catskills was not a detriment but rather fostered broad commercial success among a network of resorts. That success can be experienced again in the Catskills and a new age of tourism can once again be the driving economic factor in an area very much in need of jobs and sustainability.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the Gaming Facility Location Board revisit its decision regarding the fourth gaming license and issue a new Request for Applications to include the Catskills/Hudson Valley Region.

Very truly yours,



Michael P. Hein
Ulster County Executive

cc: Governor Andrew Cuomo
Ulster County Legislators
Town of Wawarsing Supervisor Leonard Distel
Village of Ellenville Mayor Jeffrey Kaplan