

October 31, 2005

Gale Norton, Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

FAX 202-208-5320

Dear Secretary Norton,

As you know, the Seneca Nation plans to build a casino on land purchased for that purpose within the City of Buffalo, and the Mayor of Buffalo, Anthony M. Masiello, has stated that he believes a Seneca casino would not be detrimental to the surrounding community.

We, representing a large portion of Buffalo's residents, are writing to state emphatically that the Mayor does *not* speak for us. He is demonstrably incorrect about the impact such a casino will have, and he misrepresents public sentiment in Buffalo. Because the voters have had no opportunity to express their views on the proposed project, the Mayor has no basis on which to speak of anyone's wishes—besides the handful of well-connected developers who hope to sell land for this project. Nor has any proper review of its impact been conducted, also leaving the Mayor no basis on which to speak of a casino's impact on anyone—except, again, those who hope to sell the land for it.

Without a formal impact study conducted specifically for Buffalo, the best way to estimate the impact of a casino is by extrapolating from what is known:

Economic Impact

- In 1996, Governor Pataki's own task force determined that casinos located within urban communities have a net *negative* impact on the host city's economy; i.e., more jobs are lost at existing businesses than the casino itself generates, because money formerly spent at those businesses is instead spent at the casino—and subsequently exits the community.
- Nationally, the trend is the same: research conducted at the University at Illinois concluded 2.75 other jobs are lost for every one casino job gained.
- The experience of Atlantic City confirms this pattern: after the introduction of casinos there, the number of small businesses plummeted from 2100 to 150.
- In the case of a Seneca casino, the land it occupies and the transactions that take place on it would be exempt from state and local taxes because of tribal sovereignty; thus land on which local property taxes were formerly paid would be removed from the tax rolls, and sales tax receipts would decline for every dollar formerly spent at a private business and now spent at the casino instead.
- Local governments would incur substantial costs for infrastructure improvements (water and sewer service, highway access, etc.) and provision of emergency services (police, fire, ambulance).

Social Impact

- Crime rates will rise; the experience of Atlantic City again provides confirmation, with a marked increase in all categories of crimes upon the arrival of casinos there.

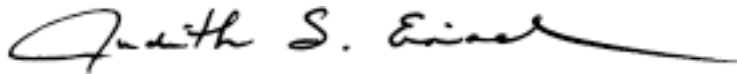
- Gambling addiction affects not only the gamblers themselves, but also imposes major costs on their families, their employers, and the surrounding community.
- Addiction rates will rise even though there are already casinos relatively nearby—addiction rates are doubled within 10 miles of a casino, and none are yet that close to Buffalo.

Impact on the Cultural and Political Health of the City

- Shutting the public out of a decision of this magnitude, denying residents an opportunity to vote on it or even offer comment in any sort of formal proceeding, is inexcusable and necessarily corrosive of local democracy.
- It is unprecedented to convert part of the downtown core of an existing city to sovereign native land for the purpose of building a casino; irrevocably and permanently ceding part of our downtown to a sovereign nation obviously must affect the social fabric of the city.

None of these issues have been addressed even superficially, let alone through any substantive study of the likely impacts. Mayor Masiello therefore has no grounds whatsoever for declaring that a Seneca casino would have no detrimental effects on the City of Buffalo. We urge you to halt this project until a proper evaluation can be done.

Respectfully yours,



Judith S. Einach
mayoral candidate, City of Buffalo

(see list of co-signers on next page)

cc: Hon. Anthony M. Masiello, Mayor, City of Buffalo
Hon. David Franczyk, President, Common Council of the City of Buffalo

Hon. Joel A. Giambra, County Executive, Erie County
Hon. George A. Holt, Jr., Chair, Legislature of Erie County

Hon. George Pataki, Governor, State of New York
Hon. Byron Brown, New York State Senate
Hon. William Stachowski, New York State Senate
Hon. Sam Hoyt, New York State Assembly
Hon. Crystal Peoples, New York State Assembly
Hon. Mark J. Schroeder, New York State Assembly
Hon. Paul Tokasz, New York State Assembly

Hon. Hillary R. Clinton, United States Senate
Hon. John McCain, United States Senate
Hon. Charles Schumer, United States Senate
Hon. George V. Voinovich, United States Senate
Hon. Brian Higgins, United States House of Representatives
Hon. Thomas M. Reynolds, United States House of Representatives
Hon. Louise Slaughter, United States House of Representatives

Co-signers of letter from Judith S. Einach

(Signers of this letter are not endorsing the candidacy of Judith Einach. We simply agree on this one issue, and stand together despite our other differences to promote the best interest of the City of Buffalo.)

Elected Officials

Hon. Joseph Golombek, Jr.
Common Council, City of Buffalo

Hon. Sam Hoyt
New York State Assembly

Hon. Crystal Peoples
New York State Assembly

Business and Civic Leaders

Steve Calvaneso

Mark Goldman

Robert Kresse

Religious Leaders

Rev. Amos Acree, Immediate Past Moderator
Western New York Churches in Covenant

Dr. Bayram Arman, Treasurer
Muslim Public Affairs Council—WNY

Rev. Dr. G. Stanford Bratton, Exec. Director
Network of Religious Communities

Rev. Jeff Carter
Houghton College at Buffalo

Rt. Rev. J. C. Fricker
Rev. Ethan J. Cole
St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral

Rev. Robert E. Grimm and Roberta J. Grimm
Pilgrim St. Luke's United Church of Christ,
and Riverside Salem United Church of Christ

Peter Jackson, President
Council of Orthodox Christian Churches on the
Niagara Frontier

Rev. Frances Manly
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara

Rev. M. Bruce McKay

Rev. Joel Miller
Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

Rev. Stephen Phelps, Chair, General Council
Presbytery of Western New York

Rev. Dan J. Schifeling
Convener, Clergy Caucus
VOICE-Buffalo

Othman Shibly, Executive Board
Islamic Society of the Niagara Frontier

Civic Groups

Allentown Association

Citizens Against Casino Gambling in Erie County
Mary Bartley, Co-Chair

Coalition Against Gambling in New York
Joel Rose, Chair

Forever Elmwood

Green Party of Erie County

New Millennium Group

Partners for a Livable Western New York
George Grasser, President

Upstate Citizens for Equality
Niagara Frontier Chapter
Daniel T. Warren, Chair