

**Testimony of Cynthia Robbins  
Owner of the Poland Spring Resort, Poland Spring Golf Course, and  
Cyndi's Dockside Restaurant**

**In Opposition to:**

**LD 1144, An Act To Authorize Tribal Gaming**

**Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs**

**March 25, 2019**

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneck, and distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Cynthia Robbins, and I am the owner and operator of the Poland Spring Resort, Poland Spring Golf Course, and Cyndi's Dockside Restaurant. I am providing written testimony in opposition to the gaming expansion bills before you today.

In addition to my concerns as a small business owner, I am also providing this testimony as a concerned citizen, as I have been a resident of Poland, Maine for nearly 50 years. I am also a member of the "Gems of 26," a group of non-profits and for-profit businesses including Shaker Village, Maine Wildlife Park along Route 26, which are rich in culture, ecology, and history. I am also a member of Poland's Community and Economic Development Committee. I also sit on two tourism boards for Androscoggin and Oxford Hills Chambers.

Poland Spring started as a stagecoach stop back in 1794 when George Washington was President. For over 150 years, Poland Spring was owned and operated by the Ricker family. Hard times struck in World War II, and consequently many ownership changes happened until my husband and I began its transformation in 1972. Through years of hard work, hardship and tragedies, we ultimately prevailed and were successful. With our staff, we have brought almost 20,000 visitors a year to Maine to enjoy our golf course and other amenities. We employ 170 local residents in full and part-time jobs. We are Poland's second largest taxpayer right after Poland Spring Water.

The extensive number of new visitors to our region since the opening of Oxford Casino more than 5 years ago has provided my businesses and the businesses of the Oxford Hills region with a much-needed shot in the arm. Many of the casino customers have stayed at my inns and eaten at my restaurants. Prior to the Casino's opening in 2013, we had only a seasonal business, but due to the year-round traffic at the Casino, we are now open for the entire year. This decision has led to more year-round good jobs, and it has been a great success – something that would not have been possible without the Casino.

If Maine allows for more casinos to be built, there is no question that the two existing casinos will see fewer visitors. If you allow more casinos to be built and divert customers from the Oxford Casino, please understand that you are also diverting them from my business and all those businesses on Route 26 and the surrounding area. This is only logical. As a businessperson, if someone built another resort and golf course nearby that will obviously have

an impact on my business because they are going to be drawing from the same pool of customers that visit my facility.

Now the difference is that anyone could do that now and you can't do a thing about it. But you can do something here with casinos – these facilities were built and located based on very specific statewide votes to allow for limited gaming in Maine – and the assurance that the floodgates would not be opened. An entire economy, regulatory structure, and investments have followed that decision. Please don't reverse the benefit brought by these casinos by opening the flood gates to expanded gambling. You could undo the single greatest economic development project ever to benefit Poland Springs and local business.

Thank you for your time and for the privilege of sharing this business owner and taxpayer's view on this subject. I ask that the committee vote against LD 1144.