

MILES UNOBSKY THEEMAN
45 GROVE STREET
BANGOR, MAINE 04401

March 24, 2019

RE: LD1144

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneck and members of the VLA Joint Standing Committee:

I am writing to express my strong OPPOSITION to LD1144.

Gambling is zero-sum game. Adding more casinos will not generate new revenue for the State of Maine. It will, however, threaten the viability of the existing casinos and equally as important negatively affect the revenue stream and tax cascade in the regions in which they are located. Penn National Gaming and Churchill Downs Inc. have invested millions of dollars in Maine and employ hundreds of people. Why would the legislature want to put those existing businesses and employment opportunities at risk?

Since gaming was first approved by state-wide referendum in 2003, gambling and the locations in which it is allowed, has always been subject to a state-wide referendum. The two existing casinos were subject to the public vote process as have several other potential casino projects and failed. The expansion which LD1144 supports, should be subject to the same referendum process.

A new multi-billion dollar casino is being built in Everett, Massachusetts, literally 4 hours away from Bangor and less than two hours away from Oxford. The effect on State of Maine tax revenues, while unknown, is projected to be significant.

Specifically in Bangor, part of the tax cascade goes to support the capital costs of the Cross Insurance Center, which has had a huge impact on attracting customers to Bangor's restaurant, accommodations and retail industries. Why would the legislature take an action which would undoubtedly have a negative impact on this region ?

In closing:

At a minimum, and before LD1144 or any such legislative initiatives are approved, the issue of increasing casino gambling in the State of Maine should be the subject of a comprehensive economic impact study to include current information on Oxford and Bangor locations and the potential for devastating disruption to this industry from the new Massachusetts casino. Then, and only then, should a referendum vote be offered to the people of Maine.

Thank you for your consideration.

Miles Theeman
45 Grove Street, Bangor
Chair, Cross Insurance Center Advisory Board
Member, The Bangor Initiative Economic Development Collaboration
mutheeman@gmail.com
207-745-7024