

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneok, 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 testimony in opposition to LD 554, An Act to Create Gaming Equity Fairness for the Native American Tribes in Maine. 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. In normal times, we employ 170 local residents in full and part-time jobs, and we hope to return to full employment as the State of Maine reopens.

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 Oxford Casino.

I will not offer any opinions on the legal issues at play with the Maine tribes and their respective relationships with state and federal governments. I only offer my perspective as a business owner that a third casino will absolutely halt the economic recovery that Oxford County and surrounding towns have enjoyed over the last decade since the casino opened. The last year has been hard on us, as pandemic restrictions have drastically limited the number of people both at the casino, but in our restaurants at both our restaurants and at the golf course. We need to get back to normal, and I ask that you don't hamper our ability to succeed by increasing pressure on our business while we are already facing significant hurdles from Covid-19.

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 554.