

PENNSYLVANIA GAMING CONTROL BOARD

PUBLIC INPUT HEARINGS

CROWN PLAZA ALLENTOWN HOTEL
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

MAY 22, 2006, 8:33 A.M.

BEFORE:

KENNETH McCABE
SANFORD RIVERS
RAYMOND ANGELI
WILLIAM T. SIMMONS, PRESIDING OFFICER

HILLARY M. HAZLETT, REPORTER
NOTARY PUBLIC



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1 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: I am William T.
2 Simmons, Hearing Appeals Officer for the Pennsylvania
3 Gaming Control Board and the Presiding Officer for
4 this public input hearing today.

5 Before we begin, let me make some
6 housekeeping remarks. Please turn off all cell
7 phones, beepers, blackberries, or other communication
8 device so as not to disturb the speakers or others in
9 the audience.

10 Please be reminded, if you choose, you may
11 submit written comments to be included as part of the
12 evidentiary hearing, which will be closed on June
13 2nd, 2006.

14 To the media representatives today, please
15 follow the protocols that you were given upon your
16 entry into the hearing room.

17 No signs on sticks, poles, or anything else
18 which might affect the safety is permitted inside the
19 hearing room.

20 At this time, would everyone please rise
21 for the Pledge of the Allegiance.

22 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

23 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you.
24 Good morning, once again. I'm William T. Simmons,
25 your Presiding Officer for this Pennsylvania Gaming

1 Control Board public input hearing.

2 The May 22nd, 2006 public input hearing of
3 the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board at Allentown,
4 Pennsylvania, regarding applications for Category II
5 license will come to order.

6 This hearing is convened by the
7 Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board pursuant to the
8 authority of Act 71 of 2004 and the PGCB Regulation
9 Section 441.2.

10 The Board is present as a panel composed of
11 the following members: Mr. Ken McCabe to my
12 immediate left and Mr. Sanford Rivers on my immediate
13 right.

14 The stenographer today is Hillary Hazlett
15 and the Clerk of the Board is Mickey Kane, both to my
16 extreme right.

17 We want to thank the Crown Plaza Hotel for
18 making this facility available for the hearing today.
19 Their cooperation and hard work has been essential in
20 bringing of this public input hearing to Allentown to
21 allow the public input of the citizens of this region
22 and to the decision making process of gaming in
23 Pennsylvania.

24 This hearing is a continuation of the April
25 28th public input hearing and part of a statewide

1 series of Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board public
2 input hearings designed to allow applicants for
3 operator gaming licenses to simultaneously present
4 their plans before the Gaming Control Board and the
5 public.

6 These hearings will also allow individual
7 members of the public, community groups, elected
8 officials, and local Government representatives to
9 express their thoughts and share their concerns with
10 the Board.

11 The hearing will continue until the
12 conclusion of the last scheduled speaker registered
13 for today is heard but in event later than 6:00 p.m.,
14 whichever comes first.

15 The rules and code of conduct for this
16 public input hearing can be accessed on the PGCB
17 website and will be strictly enforced and adhered to
18 by all participants.

19 The Board expects, and it is my
20 responsibility to insist, that courtesy prevail among
21 the audience, presenters, and speakers.

22 Therefore, audience outbursts are not
23 permitted and I respectfully ask your assistance in
24 complying with this courtesy for each speaker.

25 Vocal expressions from the audience

1 complicate the task of assuring each speaker the use
2 of the time for which they have prepared and will
3 make the stenographer's task more difficult. So
4 let's do our best to let the registered speakers be
5 heard.

6 Much will be said here today and each of us
7 should expect that we are all interested in being
8 able to hear it.

9 Speakers will not be interrupted and will
10 not be permitted to speak no longer than your
11 allotted time.

12 If I determine that any behavior is
13 disruptive to this hearing, I will call a recess and
14 resume the hearing upon the restoration of order.

15 Persons who refuse to acknowledge and obey
16 the authority of the Presiding Officer may be asked
17 to leave the room and indeed the area.

18 Our procedure this morning will be that the
19 April 28th video of the applicants' presentations
20 will be presented at the outset so that those who
21 will be testifying today but did not have the
22 opportunity to view the presentation on April 28th
23 will now be able to do so.

24 At the conclusion of the video
25 presentation, we will begin with the first community

1 group speaker.

2 The individual speakers will then have the
3 opportunity to speak immediately after the last
4 community group representative is finished speaking.

5 Spokespersons for community groups may
6 speak for up to ten minutes, and members of the
7 general public or individuals may speak for up to
8 three minutes.

9 I ask that each speaker begin your remarks
10 by stating your name, the municipality and state
11 where you reside and the name of the entity and whose
12 behalf you will speak.

13 At the conclusion of the video, all persons
14 will be sworn in at one time as a group. To assist
15 all of us in adhering to the time limits for each
16 speaker and to assist us in having as many speakers
17 heard in the time we have available today, an
18 electronic stoplight timer is located on the stage
19 directly in front of me.

20 The green light indicates that the
21 speaker's time has started. When the light turns
22 yellow, you will have 30 seconds to conclude your
23 remarks. When the light turns red, please stop
24 speaking and move yourself away from the microphone.

25 If anyone has any question about this

1 hearing or any future hearing, which will be
2 tomorrow, which is our last hearing, please see a
3 member of the staff stationed at the sign-in area
4 outside of the hearing room. We welcome and need
5 your full attention and cooperation throughout this
6 hearing.

7 Finally, should it be necessary for you to
8 converse with someone who is also attending this
9 hearing, please have your conversation outside in the
10 hallway. Thank you for your attention and
11 cooperation.

12 I will now ask that the videographers
13 please present the video.

14 (Video played.)

15 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: I want to thank
16 our production crew for that video. I would also
17 like to acknowledge Board Member Ray Angeli, who has
18 joined us.

19 A couple of announcements. The Board will
20 be taking a brief 15-minute break at about 10:30. We
21 will take some community groups prior to that time.
22 We will break for lunch at approximately 12:00 and
23 resume one hour thereafter.

24 I will at this time ask that all who are
25 going to be testifying today stand and raise your

1 right hands to be sworn.

2 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
3 testimony you're about to give in the public input
4 hearing today shall be the truth, the whole truth,
5 and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

6 THE WITNESSES: I do.

7 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: All right. You
8 may be seated.

9 I think our first community group
10 representative is Anthony Piergiovanni, Jr.

11 Let me remind all of you that the community
12 groups have up to ten minutes. You will be notified
13 when you have 30 minutes to wrap up your
14 presentation -- 30 seconds. I'm sorry. I guess
15 you'll take that deal.

16 Sir, you may begin.

17 MR. PIERGIOVANNI: Members of the Board,
18 thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address
19 you today.

20 My name is Anthony Piergiovanni, Jr. I
21 live in Lower Nazareth Township and I am one of the
22 founding members for Valley Citizens for Casino-free
23 Development, 501(c)(3), Pennsylvania non-profit
24 organization formed in March of 2005.

25 We are an all volunteer, grassroots

1 organization dedicated to educating local citizens
2 regarding the potential impact of casino development
3 in the Lehigh Valley.

4 We are a diverse group made up of business
5 persons, small business owners, teachers, college
6 professors and administrators, doctors, accountants,
7 social workers, retirees, artists, engineers,
8 ministers, and homemakers but who are all most
9 importantly taxpayers who care deeply about our
10 community.

11 Please note for the record that we are a
12 pro-development organization. We are not
13 obstructionists. We are not all opposed to gaming in
14 all of its forms. We endeavor to search out the
15 facts and work for what we believe is best for our
16 community, especially with regard to economic
17 development and quality of life issues.

18 We appreciate the difficult discussions you
19 have to make and all we ask that what we say is given
20 serious consideration.

21 Our assessment of the Lehigh Valley's
22 casino proposals has raised several concerns,
23 specifically and especially about the Bethlehem Works
24 site.

25 I was asked to speak on behalf of our

1 organization for three reasons. First, I work one
2 mile from the proposed BethWorks site. I'm there six
3 days a week, sometimes seven.

4 I sit on the Boards of three Bethlehem
5 based nonprofit organizations, one of which is a drug
6 rehabilitation resident program for Hispanic men
7 located just a couple of blocks from and in clear
8 view of the proposed casino site.

9 Thirdly, I am a graduate of the MBA program
10 of Lehigh University, which itself is within one mile
11 of the proposed casino site. Therefore, what becomes
12 of the BethWorks site directly affects those for whom
13 I care deeply.

14 Our testimony today addresses four points
15 for your consideration. The first point is a deeply
16 divided community.

17 You have heard from the mayor of Bethlehem.
18 You have heard from the mayor that Bethlehem supports
19 this casino proposal.

20 We argue that what Bethlehem citizens
21 really want is the development of the BethWorks site
22 so it can once again be a significant tax-generating
23 property with good-paying jobs.

24 The citizens have been told this cannot
25 happen without a casino. We respectfully disagree.

1 The developer himself said it could be
2 developed without a casino. It will just take many
3 years longer. This may be preferable based upon some
4 of the significant infrastructure challenges we face.

5 This issue has sharply divided the citizens
6 of Bethlehem, not whether to develop it but how to
7 develop it.

8 In fact, last year after several
9 emotion-filled meetings and hearings, our city
10 council came within one vote of amending the zoning
11 law to prohibit the casino on this site.

12 The swing vote was given not because of
13 support for a casino but rather in exchange for
14 certain commitments.

15 It's worth noting that at last November's
16 election, the highest vote greater for city council
17 was the councilman who authored that proposed
18 amendment to ban a casino from the BethWorks site.

19 Additionally, one citizen who launched a
20 last minute, write-in campaign for mayor on the
21 single issue no casino garnered an unprecedented
22 1,047 votes with no support or funding from any
23 party. Does that sound like Bethlehem supports a
24 casino?

25 We applaud the mayor's efforts to bring

1 development to the BethWorks site, but it is clear to
2 us that the citizens are deeply divided about how to
3 accomplish this; and we refuse to believe that in an
4 area growing as rapidly as the Lehigh Valley, that
5 the BethWorks property cannot attract a more
6 acceptable alternative investment.

7 In addition, we are concerned that the
8 other industrial businesses considering locating on
9 the adjacent 1,100 plus acre tract of the former
10 Bethlehem Steel land may choose to go elsewhere
11 because of the traffic and other challenges posed by
12 a casino.

13 Because of this deep division within our
14 city, we believe that the Bethlehem site is just not
15 right for a casino.

16 Point 2, inconsistent with our heritage.
17 All we have to say is our name, Bethlehem, to make
18 the point that the city's heritage is inconsistent
19 with casino gambling.

20 It should be no surprise that many people
21 from the faith-based community here are very upset
22 and even offended that a place known as the Christmas
23 City is even being considered for a casino.

24 But we being a group that is focused on
25 development and economic impact, there is another

1 issue of heritage that we find upsetting to many.

2 The men and women who labored on the former
3 Bethlehem Steel site for so many decades were proud
4 members of the Steelworkers Union.

5 We find it inconsistent and, in fact,
6 insulting to that proud heritage that the operator
7 applicant, the Venetian Sands, is a staunch non-union
8 employer. While the site may be built with union
9 tradesmen, once it's operating, all the employees
10 will be non-union.

11 Because this proposal is so inconsistent
12 with the heritage of our city and the proud heritage
13 of unionized labor here, we believe that the
14 Bethlehem site is not right for a casino.

15 Point 3, neighborhood demographics,
16 traffic, and crime. It is our understanding that
17 several citizens intend to testify regarding the
18 suitability of the site with regard to the
19 neighborhood, traffic, and crime.

20 Consequently, we will not expound beyond
21 these brief statements. The BethWorks site is across
22 the street from a dense, lower income neighborhood
23 filled with children, schools, and houses of worship.

24 Drug abuse and crime are growing problems
25 to which I can personally attest with the demand

1 regularly exceeding the supply of beds at the drug
2 rehab where I serve as treasurer.

3 A casino in this location is a terrible
4 temptation for recovering addicts and I believe
5 socially irresponsible.

6 As for the traffic, even with the planned
7 widening of Route 412, cars and buses from all
8 direction -- from all of the other directions,
9 including through these neighborhoods will be a
10 significant problem.

11 There will be many children at risk on
12 school buses and playing in the streets. It is for
13 the protection of children and families and the most
14 vulnerable of our society that we believe that the
15 Bethlehem site is just not right for a casino.

16 Point 4, brain drain and housing boom. The
17 Lehigh Valley has ten institutions of higher
18 learning, including Lehigh University and Moravian
19 College right in Bethlehem.

20 Business and university leaders alike will
21 tell you that we suffer from what is termed a brain
22 drain. That means we do an excellent job of
23 educating people just to see many of them leave the
24 area for jobs elsewhere.

25 When New Jersey passed the Highlands Water

1 Protection and Planning Act in August of 2004, there
2 was mass immigration of housing developers across the
3 state line into the Lehigh Valley.

4 Consequently, we have a housing boom and
5 rapid escalation of housing prices and traffic.
6 People from New Jersey are moving here in record
7 numbers, but many commute back for work because they
8 cannot find comparable employment here.

9 Our dilemma is that we have much educated
10 talent here but insufficient opportunities for
11 high-paying jobs. We need to slow the brain drain.
12 The only way that can happen is to work hard to
13 attract high tech industries to what little property
14 is left that is actually zoned for industrial use.

15 The BethWorks site is one of those precious
16 few sites. We need to anchor Bethlehem's economy
17 with high-paying jobs that take advantage of the
18 talent we train here and the people that are moving
19 here.

20 Working with the Governor, our city leaders
21 establish the Keystone Innovation Zone with the
22 Lehigh University in this area on that site for that
23 very reason.

24 It's intended to create knowledge
25 neighborhoods around the university. The proposed

1 casino is contrary to that intended purpose. Based
2 on this, we believe that the Bethlehem site is just
3 not right for a casino.

4 We want to comment though on the Valley's
5 other proposals. The growth of the Lehigh Valley has
6 actually blurred the lines between our cities.
7 Should a casino be located in the Valley, multiple
8 communities will be affected.

9 As I mentioned in my opening, our group has
10 closely studied all of the Lehigh Valley Casino
11 proposals, including Allentown and the Palmer
12 Racetrack, which we know is not part of the hearings
13 today.

14 We have compared them to one another and to
15 other applicants outside of the Valley. Honestly, we
16 would prefer to not have a casino anywhere here.

17 We are not a resort destination. We are
18 all concerned about the growing traffic and crime.
19 While we have concerns about all three sites and will
20 not take a position to support any, we are also
21 politically realistic.

22 Our assessment indicates that we cannot
23 argue the same degree of concern for the proposed
24 Allentown site regarding city heritage, neighborhood
25 proximity, non-union labor, and for land use, the

1 site is much smaller and the potential impact on
2 neighboring businesses appears less significant.

3 We do have concerns, however, though about
4 traffic in Allentown. Therefore, we strongly urge
5 the Board to undertake independent traffic studies
6 for all of the applicant sites so we can have an
7 unbiased assessment as possible. This is a major
8 quality of life issue for everyone here.

9 In closing, I leave you today with this to
10 consider. The Bethlehem community is deeply divided.
11 Our heritage is inconsistent with a casino. Our
12 available industrial land is minimal and we already
13 suffer a brain drain.

14 The neighborhood is too close and too
15 vulnerable and the road infrastructure is
16 insufficient.

17 For all of these reasons, we hope that you
18 will agree with our conclusion that the Bethlehem
19 site is just not right for a casino. Thank you.

20 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

21 Our next speaker is Gail Meyer, who is
22 substituting for John Wilhelm. She's representing
23 Unite Here.

24 MS. MEYER: Good morning. My name is Gail
25 Meyer. I am the Associate Manager of the

1 Pennsylvania Joint Board of Unite Here.

2 Our office is just down the street in
3 Allentown, and I myself am a resident of Bethlehem.
4 Unite Here represents thousands of people in the
5 Lehigh Valley area, many of whom you had the chance
6 to meet when we were here at the last meeting on
7 April 28th.

8 We have been a fixture in this community
9 for over 75 years, when garment manufacturers and
10 distribution centers set up shop in the area.

11 Across the country, Unite Here represents
12 nearly a half a million workers, 100,000 of whom work
13 in the gaming industry.

14 Our gaming industry members work in
15 virtually every casino market from Las Vegas to
16 Atlantic City, Mississippi, Detroit, and riverboats
17 throughout the midwest.

18 They cook and serve the food, change the
19 money, pour the drinks, and clean the house among
20 other jobs. Essentially, they are the service
21 workers that keep the casinos rolling.

22 I wanted to start by taking a moment to
23 tell you about the standard of living we have created
24 in the gaming industry, often in partnership with the
25 many gaming companies that have chosen to pursue a

1 cooperative relationship with our union.

2 There is very little detailed and
3 independent information on the quality of actual jobs
4 in the gaming industry; but over the years, we have
5 done a number of studies, some in partnership with
6 the economic policy institute, others using local,
7 state, and national sources, as well as our own data
8 that speak to the type of jobs communities can expect
9 when unionized gaming facilities are present.

10 The bottom line is that when gaming jobs
11 are unionized, they are lifting people into the
12 middle class, providing for healthy families and
13 secure retirement.

14 Just briefly look at three gaming markets
15 in which we represent gaming workers. Atlantic City,
16 which is 100 percent union; Detroit, 100 percent
17 union; and the Las Vegas strip and downtown, which is
18 close to 100 percent union.

19 In all three of those gaming markets, our
20 members enjoy full family health coverage entirely
21 paid for by the casino employer with no deductions
22 from their paychecks for this family coverage. That
23 generally means all of the workers in the casino, as
24 our collective bargaining agreements protect workers
25 in the independently managed restaurants inside the

1 casinos, for instance.

2 Less than 10 percent of service workers in
3 this country have comparable health coverage.
4 Looking at retirement benefits, all of our members in
5 these gaming markets are covered by a defined benefit
6 pension plan that was, again, entirely paid by the
7 employer contributions.

8 This is a critical retirement security in
9 the face of what we hear and see on the news every
10 day. The same is true for wages and unionized
11 casinos, which are unparalleled for service workers.

12 Gaming workers can buy homes and cars, send
13 their children to college, and comfortably
14 participate in their communities.

15 In addition, in cooperation, many casino
16 industry employers have pursued other innovative
17 initiatives, including our amazing training programs
18 that have really set the bar for hospitality industry
19 training, our joint programs to encourage hiring for
20 minority and disadvantaged communities, and our work
21 on immigration issues.

22 I raise these standards because there is no
23 other way for the Lehigh Valley to guarantee good
24 quality gaming jobs unless these jobs are unionized.

25 We are very fortunate in Pennsylvania that

1 the legislature, Governor, and Gaming Control Board
2 have recognized that simply creating jobs is not
3 enough and have required each applicant to submit a
4 plan detailing the degree to which its casino
5 proposal will likely lead to the creation of quality,
6 living wage jobs among other employment related
7 information, such as the track record of each
8 applicant's labor relations.

9 We view this to be one of the most
10 important criteria for the Board to consider when
11 granting a license to operate a casino in the Lehigh
12 Valley.

13 There are very few criteria on which to
14 assess applicants that will impact this area greater
15 than the quality of permanent jobs in these
16 facilities.

17 We view ourselves at Unite Here as a
18 mechanism to ensure we have good quality gaming jobs
19 in the Lehigh Valley and throughout the state.

20 Based on our experience in the industry,
21 there is no other way to make certain that casino
22 jobs will provide good wages and decent health and
23 pension benefits to those that work in the industry.

24 With that in mind, I want to tell you a bit
25 about our history with the Venetian in Las Vegas.

1 This company has been one of the most adversarial and
2 anti-union companies in the history of our union in
3 the gaming industry.

4 Its hotel/casino in Las Vegas is the only
5 one on the Las Vegas strip that operates without an
6 agreement with Unite Here, and it has aggressively
7 run an anti-union campaign from the first day it
8 opened.

9 Pennsylvania does not need this type of
10 employer in an industry that is likely to be
11 substantially unionized from very early on.

12 With most of our potential casino employers
13 in this state adopting a cooperative position towards
14 our union, we are hopeful that this partnership will
15 allow us and the employers to create on a statewide
16 level a good standard of living for workers in this
17 new industry.

18 It would be that much harder to accomplish
19 the goal if the Venetian is awarded a license given
20 the company's anti-union attitude towards its
21 permanent workforce and its refusal to work
22 cooperatively with us on a single issue.

23 Among a list that is too long to recite
24 here, the Venetian Las Vegas Sands and its related
25 companies and entities have funded a failed statewide

1 voter initiative in Nevada that sought to remove
2 labor unions from the political process.

3 They tried to get the police to illegally
4 arrest lawful picketers in front of its Las Vegas
5 casino.

6 They tossed the long-term unionized
7 workforce at its predecessor casino in Las Vegas out
8 on the street, violating plant closure Federal law in
9 the process, funded an anti-union organization that
10 sought to have workers revoke their union membership,
11 have been sued by the US Equal Opportunity Commission
12 in an ongoing discrimination complaint against it for
13 refusing to comply with an EEOC subpoena, have had
14 its principal owner called, quote, the million dollar
15 man, unquote, by a political columnist for its
16 efforts to unseat politicians that disagreed with
17 him, calling one a union organizer during efforts to
18 defeat her, and have run an anti-union campaign
19 against its own workforce to prevent them from
20 choosing union representation, and have sued Unite
21 Here and its affiliates several times, most recently
22 earlier this year.

23 This is just some of the items as they
24 relate to labor and employment. This is a track
25 record that the Lehigh Valley and Pennsylvania do not

1 need.

2 These types of activities will make it more
3 difficult in this close knit industry to achieve the
4 labor management cooperation that we know from
5 experience can lead to a good standard of living for
6 gaming workers.

7 What we do need is unionized gaming jobs to
8 ensure they will be of good quality where service
9 workers can raise families, have affordable health
10 insurance, and look forward to a secure retirement.

11 A few years back, the National Gaming
12 Impact Study Commission appointed by the President
13 and Congress spent two years studying the impact of
14 gaming across the US. That Commission recognized
15 this link between unionization and quality gaming
16 jobs when it recommended its full report.

17 I quote, communities considering legalized
18 gambling should look to cooperation between unions
19 and management as a means for protecting job quality,
20 end quote.

21 While we are excited about this new
22 industry in Pennsylvania and we look forward to
23 creating a good standard of living for gaming workers
24 in partnership with gaming employers here, we also
25 know that if history is any guide, there will never

1 be any cooperation toward this end from the Venetian.

2 We urge you in the strongest terms to award
3 the remaining licenses to anyone but the Venetian.

4 On behalf of myself and the members of
5 Unite Here, I thank you for this opportunity to
6 address the Board and for the chance to introduce you
7 to our members across the street in these past two
8 months. Thank you.

9 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
10 much, ma'am.

11 Our next speaker is Ben Gress from the
12 Allentown Crime Watch.

13 MR. GRESS: That is correct. Thank you.
14 My name is Ben Gress. I'm from Allentown,
15 Pennsylvania. I'm president of the President's
16 Council of the Allentown Crime Watch Program. I am
17 also Crime Watch coordinator for the city and also
18 President of one of the most successful programs in
19 the State of Pennsylvania for the last 26 years.

20 This resolution is of support for Tropicana
21 Pennsylvania, LLC. Whereas, the National Sheriffs'
22 Association developed a model program in 1972 for
23 today's Crime Watch or neighborhood watch program.

24 And whereas, the watch program was started
25 in the City of Allentown in 1974.

1 Whereas, the watch program of Allentown are
2 each comprised of ordinary residents in a particular
3 part of the city coming together to meet regularly to
4 deal with matters of common interest.

5 Whereas, watch programs enable and
6 encourage citizen participation in ensuring the
7 health, welfare, and safety of Allentown's many and
8 diverse neighborhoods.

9 Whereas, these watch programs also provide
10 citizens an effective way to engage in the civic
11 awareness of the city with the goal of approving the
12 well being of the entire city.

13 Whereas, these watch programs have
14 multiplied over the last several years and have a
15 variety of names such as Crime Watch, neighborhood
16 watch, community watch, civil watch organizations,
17 neighborhood association, block watch, or
18 neighborhood groups.

19 Whereas, while the watch programs may have
20 a variety of names, they represent a cohesive body of
21 concerned Allentown residents who are actively
22 engaged in the affairs of the neighborhood and of the
23 city.

24 Whereas, the Allentown Crime Watch
25 President's Council meets monthly and consists of

1 every President of each recognized Crime Watch
2 program in the City of Allentown.

3 Whereas, the President's Council held a
4 regularly scheduled meeting on March 16th, 2006 and
5 discussed at length the application of Tropicana
6 Pennsylvania, LLC for a gaming license.

7 And whereas, the President's Council
8 concludes that the proposed site for Tropicana Casino
9 and Hotel complex is the best possible location in
10 the Lehigh Valley and the best possible location in
11 the City of Allentown.

12 Whereas, the Tropicana site is the best
13 because it reuses vacant, industrial land, and is
14 ready for immediate development, and also surrounded
15 by excellent roads and is not near any residences or
16 schools or churches.

17 Whereas, Tropicana is strongly committed to
18 being an active, responsible and cooperative citizen
19 of Allentown based upon our face-to-face meeting with
20 the Tropicana personnel.

21 Whereas, Tropicana is strongly committed to
22 aggressively recruit, train, and hire residents from
23 an Allentown most in need.

24 Whereas, Tropicana is strongly committed to
25 purchase goods and service from small Allentown

1 businesses.

2 Whereas, during the March 16th, 2006
3 meeting, the officers of the Allentown Crime Watch
4 President's Council were authorized to prepare the
5 following and present this resolution by an
6 affirmative vote by the following members: The 4C's
7 Neighborhood Association, the 8th Ward Neighborhood
8 Group, Charlotte's Crime Watch, East Allentown
9 Rittersville Neighborhood Association, the Franklin
10 Park Civic City Association, the Library
11 Neighborhood Association, the Midway Manner Community
12 Association, the Mountainville 30 Crime Watch, which
13 I am president for 24 years, the Muhlenberg Area
14 Community Watch, North Allentown Lookout, Stevens
15 Area Safe Neighborhood Association, St. Paul's Park
16 Neighborhood Group, and West Park Civic Association.

17 Now, therefore be it resolved by Allentown
18 Crime Watch President's Council that this resolution
19 constitutes its statement of support of the
20 application for Tropicana Pennsylvania, LLC for a
21 gaming license and for development as a planned
22 facility.

23 Be it further resolved that this resolution
24 shall be directed by the Pennsylvania Gaming Control
25 Board with the intention that it become part of the

1 record with request for Tropicana Pennsylvania, LLC
2 application for licensure.

3 Sincerely yours, Ben Gress, President of
4 the Allentown Crime Watch President's Council. Thank
5 you, gentlemen.

6 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
7 much.

8 Let me remind everyone who is testifying,
9 if you have any written comments, please submit them
10 to the Clerk to my right.

11 At this time, the Board will take a
12 15-minute break. We will return in 15 minutes.
13 Thank you.

14 (Break.)

15 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Please take
16 your seats so we can begin.

17 Our next community group representative is
18 Carmelo Huertas.

19 MR. HUERTAS: My name is Carmelo Huertas.
20 I live at 1187 East Fourth Street in Bethlehem,
21 Pennsylvania. I am a member of the mayor's South
22 Side Task Force and I am speaking for that community
23 group. With a 66 percent majority at its February
24 28, 2006 meeting, that group supported the following
25 resolution.

1 The members of Mayor John B. Callahan's
2 South Side Bethlehem Task Force fully support the
3 issuance of a Class II free-standing slots casino
4 license to the Sands BethWorks Gaming, LLC.

5 We feel it is in the best interest of the
6 residents and property owners of the City of
7 Bethlehem to welcome this new industry as a way to
8 reclaim an important part of the former Bethlehem
9 plant of the now defunct Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

10 The Sands BethWorks Gaming, LLC are
11 proposing a development of hotel/casino, retail
12 restaurants, offices, and housing in many of the
13 historic buildings on the site.

14 The National Museum of Industrial history,
15 ArtsQuest in the arts and culture based SteelStax and
16 Lehigh Valley PGS Channel 39 have been offered
17 property by the developers for the creation of museum
18 space, performing arts and public performance and
19 broadcast space.

20 We support the preservation of as much of
21 the site and its iconic and historic structures, and
22 the adaptive reuse and restoration of many of the
23 buildings, opening up a newly reborn neighborhood
24 within a neighborhood for the City of Bethlehem.

25 The project will make all of Bethlehem a

1 tourism destination for families and visitors from
2 around the country and around the world and will
3 bring much needed, family sustaining, and needed jobs
4 to the City of Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley,
5 filling the void left by closure of the Bethlehem
6 Steel Corporation. Good jobs are what the citizens
7 want.

8 The new tax revenue from the development
9 and the host fee payable to the City of Bethlehem
10 will make up for the devastating loss of the City's
11 major taxpayer and the loss of 20 percent of the
12 city's taxable land area and its subsequent
13 devaluation following the abandonment and demolition
14 of much of the taxable real property.

15 The project has been planned with a
16 tremendous amount of community input over the last 18
17 months with countless meetings and discussions,
18 planning sessions, leading to first class development
19 plans that will make this project a showpiece and
20 model for the redevelopment of industrial brownfield
21 sites across America.

22 It is simply not possible for there to be
23 any project that better fits the parameters, the
24 letter, and the spirit of the law legalizing slots
25 gaming in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania than the

1 Sands BethWorks Gaming, LLC project. This project is
2 a perfect fit to the law.

3 Now, therefore be it resolved, this 28th
4 day of February 2006, that the undersigned members of
5 the Mayor's South Side Task Force, hereby urge the
6 Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board to issue a Class II
7 license to Sands BethWorks Gaming, LLC for a slots
8 casino in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

9 I thank you, the Board, for giving us this
10 opportunity and I beseech you as a member of the
11 Board and knowledgeable citizens, please allow this
12 license to come through.

13 A lot of people are concerned about
14 prostitution, crime this and other things. As you
15 well know that the main vice to gambling,
16 prostitution, and drugs is jobs and is poverty.
17 People that have no money, they do anything to make a
18 dollar.

19 We need the jobs. I live right there about
20 two and a half blocks from the site. I talked to
21 everybody and all the people in the community. I
22 haven't seen maybe one out of ten that would say, I
23 don't want it.

24 You hear everybody talking about bringing
25 all these adverse publicity and evil things to the

1 community. It's okay for me to speak about your
2 neighborhood when I do not live in your neighborhood.

3 It's okay for me to say disparaging remarks
4 about the neighborhood and the people because I'm not
5 there. I might just drive through once in a while
6 and I say, who wants to live there?

7 Well, I live there. We have lots of people
8 that live there. We have a very, very strong need
9 for jobs. That's my main concern and the reason I am
10 here. I beseech members of the Board to take this
11 into consideration. Thank you very much.

12 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
13 Roger Hudak, Southeast Block Watch of
14 Bethlehem.

15 MR. HUDAK: Members of the Pennsylvania
16 Gaming Control Board, my name is Roger Hudak. I live
17 at 1256 East Fifth Street in Bethlehem. My home was
18 about 500 yards due south of the BethWorks Now
19 proposed Sands Casino.

20 As Chairman of the Southeast Bethlehem
21 Block Watches, I speak for hundreds of Southeast
22 Bethlehem residents, who have been fully supportive
23 of this vast project for many years.

24 I have been asked by them to address you
25 and with their desire for this project. Their

1 petitions have already been delivered and entered
2 into the record with the City of Bethlehem.

3 Long before BethWorks Now, long before Act
4 71 made slots a reality in PA, long before Mike
5 Perrucci owned the site, my neighbors and I have been
6 actively involved with the transformation of a once
7 steel mill brownfield into an employment site that
8 would replace Bethlehem Steel as the major industry
9 in our city and do all of this while preserving the
10 heritage of one of the last of Pennsylvania's real
11 steel towns.

12 It was more than a decade ago when Steven
13 Donches launched the National Museum of Industrial
14 History portion of the site, the beginning of a plan
15 that could make this city a destination for tourism
16 that would dedicate this historic site to the men and
17 women who worked here for almost a century, helping
18 to actually build America, the America as we know it
19 today. That heritage preservation has become a
20 perspective reality with this project.

21 Our city government made vast improvements
22 and investment to refurbish the streetscape of the
23 site, while the owner at that time of ISG marketed
24 the site to the world and nothing happened.

25 It was not until March 27th of 2004 when a

1 group of citizens interested in the preservation of
2 the site gathered under the guidance of Shan Holt of
3 the Middle States Regional Center for humanities, a
4 group from Rutgers University, to spend an entire
5 Saturday at the Kemmerer Museum of Historic
6 Bethlehem, brainstorming ideas for the possible
7 future development of that site.

8 Some of those ideas that came out of that
9 forum seemed widely overreaching because of costs.
10 The preservation of the blast furnace and the many
11 buildings on the site, the utilization of the site as
12 a place to work, play, and live where possible, a
13 place that would draw tourism to this stalled
14 National Museum of National History so that they,
15 that museum, could foster and help grow the region.

16 It was about three months later when the
17 gaming became a law in the Commonwealth. In those
18 months, the site was purchased by Mike Perrucci and
19 Newmark Corporation.

20 During the summer of 2004, I met with Mike,
21 with our agenda for this site. By then, it included
22 the gaming piece to provide the tourism to make
23 BethWorks Now a destination, not just a casino in a
24 strip mall or just something off the interstate
25 highway.

1 It would be an engine that could drive the
2 build out of the rest of this site. At the same time
3 -- that same build out that we planned in March of
4 2004 at the Kemmere Museum but now with the potential
5 means to fund the thing, to fund that project, a
6 slots parlor, hotel, and entertainment venue.

7 Our day long event provided the skeletal
8 framework of that project you've seen presented by
9 BethWorks. I gave all of that stuff to Mike
10 Perrucci. He took it and ran with it. That was on
11 April the 28th when you saw the full build out.

12 You noticed the relatively small area of
13 the plan that houses the gaming piece. The rest of
14 that plan is economic development for the city of
15 Bethlehem.

16 These people not only listened to us, the
17 people from the Venetian Sands, but they asked us to
18 help us continue the renaissance, not only of
19 Bethlehem's gritty steel town south side but the
20 renaissance of the entire city.

21 From the very beginning, it was a WE
22 project. A few people became disinterested or
23 disenchanted because change is uncomfortable to some,
24 impossible for others, as we have heard, and simply
25 was not done in this city without the blessing of a

1 small, but very provincial and powerful group of the
2 so-called ruling class.

3 The Gaming Law was just not for Bethlehem.
4 They said slow growth, they said, but as slow as the
5 last ten years of rusting in peace on this site is
6 certainly not beneficial for preservation in my
7 purview.

8 Nothing changes if nothing changes and
9 nothing changed in ten years. We want to preserve
10 that heritage of steel making that built America, not
11 watch it rust into history because slow growth is
12 good growth proponents or handwringing pessimism
13 where the anti-gaming politics game playing.

14 Thus, we have fully supported BethWorks Now
15 Venetian Sands partnership development in their quest
16 for a freestanding gaming license.

17 In the best interest of Bethlehem, the
18 coalition of various organizations and property
19 owners could continue facilitating the dream of
20 turning this rusting steel site into an almost \$900
21 million resort community, complete with a world class
22 museum, a prime retail facility, housing, parking
23 garages, stage venue, hotel and gaming piece that
24 provide a continuation of the south side renaissance,
25 with a seamless blend of the existing neighborhoods

1 into new neighborhoods on the once foreboding steel
2 making facility while providing thousands of new,
3 good jobs in the city.

4 I thought it was interesting to hear a
5 couple of things that were mentioned just in the past
6 speeches.

7 I heard that the Venetian Sands is the best
8 place to work by the Las Vegas group, best place to
9 work for the past three years. We know that they
10 will be. They've been very good to us.

11 At stake in this development besides the
12 potential for the hefty percentage of the City of
13 Bethlehem's annual budget, including real estate
14 taxes and annual licensing fee, is an ongoing
15 partnership of Bethlehem's organizations and
16 residents to establish a brand new community that
17 will ensure the celebration of Bethlehem Steel making
18 heritage in the history of America and the
19 preservation of some of its magnificent, industrial
20 buildings for the Steel Stax venue, for our own Arts
21 Quest Organization and for the Smithsonian affiliated
22 National Museum of Industrial History.

23 Most forward thinking businessmen and
24 residents of the city already acknowledge that the
25 potential for the continued growth is exponential

1 with this partnership.

2 We will be helping BethWorks Now Venetian
3 investors grow a new community on a historic site of
4 an old community while the heritage and the history
5 of the site are preserved. They own this property.
6 It is theirs, not ours. Yet, they have included us
7 as partners in their planning sessions and in their
8 final product.

9 I respect and trust Mike Perrucci and Andy
10 Aboud and their organizations. They are fully
11 cognizant of the great responsibility of developing
12 this brownfield in concert with an already existing
13 city around it. It is a real brownfield, brown.

14 BethWorks Now people are receptive to our
15 wants and needs, hopes and wishes and even fears of
16 the new Bethlehem to rise from the rusting cocoon of
17 Bethlehem Steel's abandoned plant.

18 This is a partnership that will be a
19 centerpiece example of Pennsylvania's development of
20 a dead brownfield site being reborn as a tourism
21 destination in a very vibrant and vital city.

22 Most Bethlehem residents, Bethlehem's
23 mayor, and administration and city and county
24 councils all agree that this project not only fits
25 the prerequisite gaming license requirements for the

1 restoration of the largest American brownfield site
2 back to the tax rolls, but also delivers economic
3 development exponentially better than anything that
4 could be possibly done any other way, while bringing
5 thousands of good jobs to its citizens and preserving
6 the rich history of Bethlehem Steel making roots and
7 Bethlehem Steel's tremendous historic contributions
8 to the 20th century.

9 Please consider us, the actual residents,
10 the people who live in the neighborhood where the
11 slots casino will be built who are citizens -- who
12 are also citizens for a better Bethlehem.

13 We will fully -- we are fully in favor of
14 development of this site and please grant BethWorks
15 Now, the Venetian, the necessary gaming license to
16 begin this last leg of our rebirth. Thank you.

17 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
18 much, sir.

19 Kim Beitler.

20 MS. BEITLER: Good morning, gentlemen. My
21 name is Kim Beitler. I'm speaking today as President
22 of the 8th Ward Neighborhood Block Watch.

23 We are a neighborhood organization
24 comprised of residents that reside in Center City
25 Allentown. Our group's boundaries cover a portion of

1 the 8th Ward that falls under Census 200 Tracts 16
2 and 17, with a total population size of 7,265
3 residents.

4 Our neighborhood is densely populated and
5 greatly diverse. Household incomes fall into the low
6 to middle income brackets.

7 Our group has been in existence since 1988
8 with the goal of encouraging a community of informed,
9 inspired, and committed citizens to become actively
10 engaged as volunteers in the civic affairs that not
11 only affect our immediate neighborhoods but also the
12 well being of the City of Allentown. That is why we
13 find ourselves speaking with you today.

14 We realize our city is in great financial
15 need and could be greatly benefited by the economic
16 stimulus that Tropicana's Casino and Hotel can
17 provide.

18 We support this proposal for many reasons.
19 First, the location is a prime location for a casino
20 due to its current industrial usage and strong
21 surrounding infrastructure and by not being
22 surrounded by residential homes or schools.

23 Second, we are pleased that Tropicana has
24 made a strong commitment to the Allentown business
25 community by agreeing to purchase goods and services

1 from some business owners.

2 And lastly, but certainly not least, our
3 neighborhood is in great need. Our residents are
4 hungry for change and looking forward to the
5 employment opportunities that Tropicana's Casino and
6 Hotel can provide to us.

7 We feel extremely confident in saying the
8 8th Ward Neighborhood Block Watch is in full support
9 of Tropicana Pennsylvania's application for license
10 to be awarded for the City of Allentown.

11 We believe in their commitment to the
12 community. We believe in their commitment to be
13 responsible neighbors. We believe in the work they
14 have done in the past and the work they will do in
15 the future.

16 It is our position that the City of
17 Allentown and its residents will benefit greatly from
18 this development and we ask you as members of the
19 Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board to look favorably
20 upon the application. Thank you very much.

21 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
22 much.

23 William Newhard, Lehigh Building and
24 Construction Trades Council.

25 MR. NEWHARD: Good morning. Members of the

1 Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, thank you for the
2 opportunity to address you this morning.

3 My name is Bill Newhard. I'm business
4 manager of the International Brotherhood of
5 Electrical Workers Local 375 and president of the
6 Lehigh Valley Building and Construction Trades
7 Council.

8 I represent approximately 4,000 union
9 tradesmen throughout the Lehigh Valley. I live in
10 Salisbury Township. My office is at 12th and Liberty
11 in Allentown.

12 I am speaking today in support of the
13 proposed Sands BethWorks application for Class II
14 gaming license, as well as the Troop Lehigh Valley.

15 As we are all aware, the Lehigh Valley has
16 been struggling economically for far too long. Las
17 Vegas Sands Corporation has signed a project labor
18 agreement, which will guarantee that this project
19 will be built by the skilled union labor force
20 available in the Lehigh Valley.

21 Las Vegas Sands Corporation has a solid
22 record of building with union labor throughout the
23 country.

24 I've been assured by my counterparts in Las
25 Vegas that this company treats its workers very well.

1 The proposed casino is currently being planned on a
2 brownfield known to us as the old Bethlehem Steel
3 site.

4 This site is a very large part of
5 Pennsylvania's history and at one time Bethlehem
6 Steel employed some 30,000 union members.

7 Through extremely hard work, these
8 employees built steel for battleships and steel for
9 buildings that currently skyline major United States
10 cities today.

11 The Las Vegas Sands has promised to
12 preserve many historical significant buildings, which
13 will be a tribute to the many steelworkers that once
14 worked on this site.

15 Governor Rendell recently stated that when
16 the BethWorks plan is completed, it will be the
17 greatest brownfield redevelopment in the country.

18 Las Vegas Sands has proposed to redevelop
19 126 acres and bring new life to a site that has
20 fallen into disrepair. I believe that without Sands
21 BethWorks, this brownfield will stay brown for many
22 years to come.

23 I would rather celebrate division of seeing
24 such a historical landmark brought back to its former
25 glory via museums and would truly regret if we let

1 such an important opportunity to pass us by.

2 The economic benefits of the BethWorks site
3 is also very clear to me. By putting these acres
4 back on the tax rolls and by putting thousands of
5 people back to work, not only in the skilled labor
6 force but also more permanently in the proposed
7 casino, restaurants, and shops, this will be a major
8 boost to the economic revitalization in the Lehigh
9 Valley.

10 Lastly, the Sands BethWorks have made an
11 unparalleled commitment to the area's nonprofit
12 community. The Lehigh Valley building trades are
13 very active in this community, because we believe the
14 vitality of our region's nonprofit sector is a key to
15 improving the quality of life for the families who
16 live here.

17 I'm especially glad to hear that the Sands
18 BethWorks will make a National Museum of Industrial
19 History a reality at the Bethlehem Steel site.

20 As any Lehigh Valley resident present in
21 this room today can attest to, most of us had a
22 relative or friend who contributed blood and sweat to
23 our industrial history. The next generation needs to
24 know this history. BethWorks would make this all
25 possible.

1 The Tropicana Lehigh Valley in its Phase 1
2 planning stage will be creating 750 construction jobs
3 and over 1,960 ancillary jobs throughout our region.

4 As an added benefit to this project, an
5 additional 1,300 casino jobs will be created that pay
6 an average of 35,000 a year including benefits.

7 As you are aware, Allentown being the third
8 largest city in Pennsylvania has been struggling
9 economically for some time now.

10 Our corporation has promised and signed a
11 project labor agreement, which guarantees this
12 venture will be built by the local skilled union
13 labor force available in the Lehigh Valley.

14 When Phase I and Phase II of this project
15 are complete, the Aztar Corporation would have made a
16 \$525 million investment to our city. Allentown and
17 the Lehigh Valley needs this once in a lifetime
18 opportunity to restart our city's economy.

19 This project will also generate much needed
20 revenue and will be a catalyst for future development
21 and modernization of existing facilities within the
22 City of Allentown and the surrounding Lehigh Valley.

23 The proposed project will also be bringing
24 to the Lehigh Valley a major convention center which,
25 in conjunction with the adjacent professional sports

1 facility being planned, will present an ideal
2 visitor's destination for not only families but also
3 the business sector.

4 In conclusion, the millions of dollars
5 generated each year in tax revenues will not only be
6 used for revitalization but could also be used to
7 help reduce Lehigh Valley property taxes, necessary
8 improvements made to schools, and also fund much
9 needed social services.

10 The members of the Gaming Board, thank you
11 for your time and the opportunity to make the
12 BethWorks Sands and the Aztar Corporation or one or
13 the other a reality. We're looking forward to your
14 decision. Thank you.

15 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

16 John Egizio, East Side Youth Center.

17 MR. EGIZIO: Good morning. I'm Jack Egizio
18 I'm here to represent the officers, membership of the
19 East Side Your Center.

20 We're a 50-year-old non-profit youth
21 organization, which provides sports programs for
22 approximately 800 young people each year from the
23 ages of 5 to 17.

24 The majority of children participating in
25 our programs come from low to middle income families,

1 one parent homes, minorities.

2 We're located about two miles from the
3 proposed building site for a casino. We offer
4 basketball, baseball, football, soccer, wrestling,
5 cheerleading, volleyball, and other educational
6 programs.

7 Our organization is one of the finest in
8 Pennsylvania. We have approximately 120 volunteers
9 giving countless hours working with our children. We
10 have seen many of these young people go on to be
11 recognized in our schools, colleges, and communities.

12 We contribute much of this to the
13 concerning guidance given by our coaches. We're here
14 speaking for those families of low to middle income
15 who do not have the extra dollars to take their
16 children to parks, baseball, football, or hockey
17 games, or on vacation.

18 We fill that void in their lives by
19 offering year round activities for these children.
20 That's why our presence here is so important. We
21 keep them off the streets.

22 Here is our main concern with having a
23 casino in our backyard. Five years ago, we realized
24 we were handicapped to serve more children by our
25 lack of a larger facility. That's when we started

1 the wheels in motion to raise money to add on to our
2 present facility.

3 With much sweat, energy on the part of our
4 members along with our state representative and
5 legislatures, we sought out and got money for the
6 state, the county, the city, local businesses, and
7 charitable foundations and grants to obtain our goal
8 of \$1.7 million.

9 We have multiple year pledges and
10 commitments that total 1.1 million. Even without
11 help we carry a \$750,000 mortgage, which to us means
12 a monthly payment of \$6,800.

13 The bulk of our income to meet monthly
14 bills and the mortgage payment comes from our bingo
15 games, which are held every Sunday and Wednesday.

16 We naturally have a great concern as to
17 whether the patrons of our bingo games will spend
18 their money on our game or at the casino.

19 We then met with the Tropicana Group.
20 Their representatives assured us they don't want to
21 cripple the fund-raising efforts of a youth
22 organization by their presence, which would be the
23 same as adding another bingo game across the street.

24 We know that some of the money now coming
25 to our games will go to the casino. However,

1 Tropicana has pledged to work with us if, in the
2 future, we experience financial difficulties.

3 They do not want to be the bad guys to an
4 organization that does so much good. This could be
5 done by special fund-raising, which they would do so
6 we could continue to meet our financial obligations.

7 Allentown is experiencing a large financial
8 crisis. At the present time, there's a very limited
9 amount of money for recreational programs throughout
10 the city.

11 This is most important to us since young
12 people are our concern. Our newly elected Mayor
13 Pawlowski took on a city with a horrendous financial
14 problem. It's like looking through a dark tunnel
15 with no light at the end.

16 Our Mayor, who was not a gambler himself,
17 went to Evansville, Indiana, a city much like our own
18 in cultural, religious, demographic, and population
19 aspects.

20 He met with mayors past and present,
21 religious leaders, political officials, and many
22 others trying to weigh the good and bad efforts a
23 casino in Evansville.

24 After much soul searching and realizing the
25 responsibility to Allentown, he came to a decision

1 that bringing a casino to Allentown would be a
2 blessing in disguise without putting a heavier tax
3 burden on our citizens.

4 We're practical people in this area and the
5 incentive, the money, would help eventually put
6 Allentown back on its feet and be able to continue
7 with business as usual.

8 I've lived on the east side of Allentown
9 most of my life. I've watched Allentown rise to a
10 thriving, progressive city.

11 I've also watched the closing of our big
12 industries, the jobs dissolve, the taxes go up along
13 with crime and unemployment.

14 Bringing a casino to our city would be a
15 win/win situation. We at the youth center are
16 delighted with the idea of a new employer coming to
17 our town.

18 Our business restaurants, parks, shopping
19 centers will all benefit from an influx of people
20 coming to our area.

21 There are those that contend that traffic
22 will be a problem. However, a casino is not like a
23 sporting event that starts at, say, 7:00 at which
24 time everybody is coming into the area at the same
25 time. No.

1 People will come and go at any time of the
2 day or night; thus, not overloading the highways at
3 every given hour.

4 The bulk of the proposed traffic would not
5 crowd our city roads but would come from the
6 Pennsylvania Turnpike, Route 22, Route 309, I-78,
7 Airport Road and the airport itself.

8 Persons flying into our area for business,
9 conventions and shows, staying at hotels/motels will
10 certainly patronize the casino in such close
11 proximity.

12 Those who fear that building a casino here
13 will overburden our prison should note the vast
14 majority of our inmates in the Lehigh County Prison
15 are there for drug-related crimes, not from gambling
16 problems.

17 We feel that supporting a casino in East
18 Allentown would be beneficial to both us and the
19 city. Look at what Tropicana will deliver if awarded
20 a license; 750 construction jobs, 1,300 full-time
21 jobs, a police station on the east side of Allentown,
22 a new fire engine, an ambulance.

23 The monies that would be received by our
24 city and county yearly, the significant economic
25 spin-off that will occur for Allentown and the Lehigh

1 Valley.

2 The East Side Youth Center, its officers
3 and members support the building of a casino by
4 Tropicana on the present Agere property. Thank you
5 very much.

6 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
7 Michelle Young, Greater Lehigh Valley
8 Chamber.

9 MS. YOUNG: Thank you very much. Good
10 morning, members of the Gaming Control Board, fellow
11 Lehigh Valley community members, and guests. My name
12 is Michelle Young. I serve as the Vice President of
13 Public Policy for the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber
14 of Commerce.

15 We are an organization built by
16 partnerships across this region, and we include
17 almost 5,000 member businesses in the Lehigh Valley
18 area.

19 We are the fastest growing chamber in the
20 country and the second largest in the Commonwealth of
21 Pennsylvania.

22 I come before you today to speak on behalf
23 of our Chamber Chair, Anne Baum, who was unable to be
24 here with you and the members regarding gaming in the
25 Lehigh Valley.

1 Since gaming was legalized in the
2 Commonwealth when Governor Rendell signed Act 71 into
3 law on July 5th, 2004, it did not take long for
4 everyone to form an opinion, pro, con, or somewhere
5 in the middle on the issue of gaming.

6 Although the licenses won't be announced
7 until the fall, it appears the Lehigh Valley is a
8 very strong contender for receipt of a gaming
9 license. Because the Chamber is the recognized
10 resource empowering businesses to thrive in the
11 Lehigh Valley, Chamber Leadership believes that it's
12 important that we represent our members in this
13 public policy discussion, come forth with a position
14 on the issue, and bring it before you today at the
15 hearing.

16 I will share with you first the Chamber's
17 process for reviewing and determining our position on
18 this very important issue. The process involved all
19 levels of Chamber membership and the issue was
20 thoroughly reviewed as it passed through each level.

21 Here's how we came to our position. Step
22 one, two of our regional councils that may see a
23 direct impact from proposed casino projects reviewed
24 the issue and surveyed their respective members,
25 finally taking a specific position to their

1 constituencies.

2 The Allentown Business Council endorsed the
3 proposed Lehigh Valley Tropicana project. The
4 Bethlehem Council endorsed the proposed BethWorks Now
5 project.

6 Secondly, the Greater Lehigh Valley
7 Chamber's Public Policy Committee representing our
8 entire membership under the leadership of Chamber
9 Vice Chair Buddy Lesavoy reviewed that issue from a
10 regional Chamber-wide perspective.

11 The Public Policy Committee supported a
12 gaming license in the Lehigh Valley as a tool to
13 stimulate economic development in our region but did
14 not choose a specific site to endorse.

15 The third step, our Full Board of Governors
16 was presented with the Public Policy Committee's
17 recommendation at our March 27th meeting, a lengthy
18 discussion ensued.

19 Board members presented their opinions of
20 the positive implications of gaming, including the
21 \$10 million minimum host fee to be paid annually to
22 the city awarded the license and approximately 5
23 million to the awarded county, job creation,
24 increased tax base, visitor shopping, and dining at
25 our members' businesses, conference facilities, and

1 property tax relief.

2 Other Board members expressed their
3 concerns about this issue including the social impact
4 casinos may have on families, the potential to create
5 more crime, addictions, and the potential negative
6 impacts to small business owners as they compete with
7 casinos for employees.

8 Both sides strongly felt the Chamber needs
9 to be actively involved in the planning in which
10 casinos would be integrated with the existing
11 business community in the event that the Lehigh
12 Valley is awarded a license.

13 After that discussion, as in all Democratic
14 processes, we took a vote. The majority ruled in
15 favor of the following statement: The Greater Lehigh
16 Valley Chamber of Commerce supports the Lehigh Valley
17 receiving a gaming license as a tool to stimulate
18 economic development in our region and encourages the
19 licensee to include the Chamber membership in the
20 developmental strategy, ensuring the business
21 community's voice is heard in our communal interests
22 of economic development.

23 As you can see, the process for the Chamber
24 to arrive at a position involves members at all
25 levels of our organization. We did present them with

1 effective gathered data for all of our councils, and
2 Committee and Board members took time to review and
3 understand both the pros and cons of the issue and
4 they presented their positions very well.

5 I am proud to tell you when we have an
6 effective system to fairly evaluate issues of such
7 magnitude and present solid positions on important
8 issues.

9 Thank you very much for allowing me to
10 speak today on behalf of the Greater Lehigh Valley
11 Chamber of Commerce. We are anxious to be involved
12 in future discussions, and we look forward to working
13 closely with all of you should the Lehigh Valley
14 receive a gaming license. Thank you.

15 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
16 much.

17 Jack Groblewski.

18 MR. GROBLEWSKI: My name is Jack
19 Groblewski. I am pastor of New Covenant Christian
20 Community Church, which is located about a mile from
21 the proposed Bethlehem Valley site.

22 I would like to thank the members of the
23 Board for allowing me to address you. I'm the Senior
24 Pastor representing congregations who worship
25 approximately one mile from the proposed Bethlehem

1 casino site.

2 The English-speaking congregation is
3 composed of 600 active weekly attenders. The
4 Hispanic congregation is composed of 300 active
5 weekly attenders. Half of the members of our English
6 congregation hail from Bethlehem. However, the other
7 anglos live in the municipalities but primarily from
8 the City of Allentown.

9 The Hispanic congregation, however,
10 preponderantly lives in Bethlehem, specifically in
11 the neighborhoods adjacent to the proposed casino
12 site in Bethlehem.

13 I'm also on the Board of Directors of a
14 resident drug rehabilitation facility located less
15 than one quarter mile from the proposed site in
16 Bethlehem.

17 I want to highlight for you that my concern
18 is not merely for Bethlehem but for the Lehigh Valley
19 in general.

20 However, I'm arguing that the proposed
21 Bethlehem site would represent a significantly
22 greater social cost with less accompanying fiscal and
23 social benefits than the Allentown site, at least as
24 far as the Lehigh Valley is concerned.

25 The recorded rise in Bethlehem's population

1 during the last two census periods has been fueled by
2 the dramatic increase in the minority population who
3 reside proximal to the Bethlehem proposed site.

4 These are neighborhoods of primarily
5 Hispanic and African American populations. The
6 household incomes in these neighborhoods is
7 significantly lower than the primarily white
8 neighbors and the more affluent north side of
9 Bethlehem.

10 These are households whose circumstances
11 make them much more vulnerable to the negative social
12 effects of gaming.

13 Because the Bethlehem site is described as
14 a brownfield site, I want to point out that this
15 description is a bit deceptive.

16 The proposed site is entrenched in these
17 existing neighborhoods unlike the Allentown site or
18 even more to the point the Limerick site.

19 Bethlehem does not remotely harbor the
20 earmarks of a destination site for gaming. I found
21 it interesting that in the Sands presentation, which
22 I hadn't seen, that most of the neighborhood
23 depictions come from the north side of the city, not
24 from the south side where the gaming would occur.

25 For example, a visit to an approximate one

1 mile radius of the proposed Bethlehem site would
2 produce the following observations. Within about one
3 mile, and that I believe can be characterized as
4 walking distance from the site, there are two
5 Catholic parochial schools, one Evangelical Christian
6 school, three public elementary schools, one public
7 middle school, one private preparatory school,
8 elementary through high school, one public charter
9 school, one mental health center, two resident drug
10 rehabilitation facilities, one senior high-rise, one
11 senior citizen's housing complex, one senior managed
12 care facility, one community college satellite
13 campus.

14 This radius reaches the campus of Lehigh
15 University with an enrollment of 6,641 students.
16 This one-mile radius would reach the south campus of
17 Moravian College who has an enrollment of 1,750
18 students.

19 There is one YMCA, one YWCA which often
20 houses transients, one soup kitchen, two boys' clubs
21 one girls' club, one community health center, 25
22 established churches within a mile, none of which is
23 storefront churches -- these are churches that have
24 been there for years -- two substantial public
25 housing development neighborhoods, one Salvation Army

1 Center and one job training.

2 This area is not merely a rustbelt waste
3 land. This is a place teeming with people with lots
4 of dreams and more than enough existing obstacles in
5 their lives.

6 This site is a stones throw from our city's
7 two poorest neighborhoods and what's more,
8 Bethlehem's administration has secured virtually no
9 firm incentives, no community buffers whatsoever from
10 its casino developer.

11 Now, this isn't the case in Allentown where
12 a number of firm concessions have been secured in
13 this site, at least approximates a destination
14 location removed from the active neighborhood.

15 I fear that the greatest game of chance to
16 be played will be played with the destinies of those
17 who live in these neighborhoods; primarily, our
18 poorest people and our students.

19 There certainly are more logistical
20 arguments to advance in order to dissuade you from
21 the Bethlehem site. I'm sure you've heard and will
22 hear concerns about water and sewage inadequacies,
23 traffic flow nightmares, and the lack of clear
24 turnaround time for casino-generated income.

25 My interest is in minimizing damage done to

1 people and maximizing help for people. When I hear
2 phrases like negative social impact, in my business
3 it translates to people getting hurt. I believe you
4 can make a decision to help our cities here in the
5 Lehigh Valley and to minimize our hurts.

6 One other quick observation. Bethlehem is
7 burgeoning with development right now even in the
8 adjacent properties to the brownfields.

9 Despite its debt, Bethlehem is not facing
10 immediate bankruptcy as Allentown is. It is
11 unimaginable that this site will not find alternative
12 development in short order.

13 Even on the south side of Bethlehem, real
14 estate prices right now are appreciating. What's
15 more, it's my understanding that there's a casino
16 revenue sharing agreement reached between the two
17 cities, Allentown and Bethlehem, and which is
18 attached to a Bill currently before the State Senate.

19 The shared revenue were the casino license
20 to go to Allentown would dramatically impact
21 Bethlehem city's fiscal condition. On the other
22 hand, the shared revenue or the license to be granted
23 to Bethlehem would not significantly impact
24 Allentown's deep crisis, its potential insolvency.

25 Members of the board, I'm assuming that

1 what has motivated each of you personally in serving
2 Pennsylvania is the well being of the municipalities
3 that will be impacted by your decisions.

4 I know that your intention is to have the
5 casinos populated by patrons seeking to entertain
6 themselves.

7 I don't think your intention is to populate
8 these casinos with patrons whose motivation is their
9 desperation.

10 Perhaps somewhere in your public service
11 education or your careers, you've run across the name
12 of Rheinhold Niebuhr, the great political ethicist
13 and a teacher.

14 He said this, he said, politics involves
15 finding proximate solutions to insoluble problems. I
16 realize this is your daunting task here.

17 These Lehigh Valley cities have huge
18 problems that you can impact. I submit to you that
19 the wisest and most humanistic way forward is not to
20 place the casino in Bethlehem. Thank you very much
21 for your time.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

23 Joseph Davis, Midway Manor Community
24 Association.

25 MR. DAVIS: Good morning, gentlemen. On

1 behalf of the residents of the East Side of
2 Allentown, I welcome you back to our great city.

3 My name is Joe Davis. I'm President of the
4 Midway Manor Community Association and the Midway
5 Manor Crime Watch.

6 Midway Manor is a community of about 600
7 plus families located on the east side of Allentown,
8 approximately one mile away from the proposed
9 Tropicana site.

10 We are recognized as one of the most stable
11 and community-oriented neighborhoods in Allentown.
12 We also have the longest running organized crime
13 watch program in Allentown.

14 I'm here to represent these organizations
15 in asking this Board to select the Lehigh Valley
16 Tropicana as your choice for a Lehigh Valley casino.

17 We believe that the Allentown site is the
18 best location for a casino and its affiliated
19 enterprises such as hotels, conference centers,
20 restaurants, and other entertainment complexes.

21 We realize its impact on unemployment and
22 positive property values. We recognize a favorable
23 economic impact such businesses would bring to our
24 city and surrounding municipalities.

25 We also envision Allentown being an

1 entertainment destination for a large surrounding
2 area.

3 This venture along with the proposed
4 baseball stadium and the Pocono Downs will be the
5 cornerstone of an entertainment complex.

6 One other positive aspect is that they will
7 build on a former industrial site as it's physically
8 set apart from existing neighborhood, schools, and
9 places of worship.

10 It is our belief that in order for this
11 enterprise to be a success, you need a three-way
12 partnership in place. You need a host city with the
13 ability to supply a desirable location with an
14 adequate infrastructure.

15 You need an enterprise willing to invest in
16 the city. Finally, you need the support of the
17 surrounding communities and its residents.

18 This is where Allentown and the Tropicana
19 takes its place as the number one choice for a casino
20 and the supporting businesses in Allentown.

21 Allentown is the third largest city in
22 Pennsylvania. We have diverse culture that
23 complements the visions of the proposed Tropicana
24 Gaming and Entertainment Complex.

25 We have an available workforce that has

1 demonstrated its work ethic since the early days of
2 Mack Trucks and Western Electric.

3 We have stable communities that would be
4 able to provide local housing for the employees of
5 this enterprise. We have a city with a majority of
6 its residents supporting this proposal.

7 We also have a city looking to the future
8 that is able to break with its past. We have moved
9 on from a city dominated by manufacturing industries
10 and are looking forward to establishing a new and
11 exciting economic base.

12 On a personal note, I am the Past Chairman
13 of the Nazareth Chapter of Bricklayers Local 5. I
14 can attest to a competent available workforce that
15 can build these facilities in their required time.

16 You have heard testimony from different
17 sources about the economic impact this business will
18 bring to our city. This alone has had a positive
19 impact on the residents and hopefully a favorable
20 reaction from this Board.

21 The reason I volunteered to speak before
22 this Board in support of the Lehigh Valley Tropicana
23 is for another valid reason.

24 In the past, our community has suffered
25 from local businesses that have no interest in

1 community relations. Their only goal in our view was
2 to make money and not concern themselves with the
3 neighborhood.

4 This has led to major resentment from these
5 neighborhoods and in one case has led to a court
6 battle.

7 We do not believe this will happen with the
8 Tropicana management. In fact, they have made public
9 commitments to work with our communities from
10 purchasing new safety equipment to fund-raising ideas
11 with our community associations.

12 This is the type of venture that will
13 succeed in our city. Mutual cooperation between the
14 parties will lead to long-term success.

15 We have researched the relationship with
16 their existing casinos and have come to the
17 conclusion that they are honest in their commitments
18 and place a high priority on working with their
19 neighborhoods.

20 We look forward to this enterprise that
21 will be as grand and luxurious as any casino. It
22 will also be that local business that becomes a part
23 of the east side of Allentown. They will take part
24 in our functions as we take part in theirs.

25 We do not look upon this venture as just a

1 gaming enterprise. We see it for the overall
2 opportunities. We look forward to quality
3 entertainment such as concerts, top name entertainers
4 and other venues that we previously had to travel to
5 see. The proposed convention center and hotels will
6 bring a steady influx of tourists who will be amazed
7 at what the City of Allentown has to offer, from our
8 museums to an unparalleled park system to art walks,
9 historical sites, etc.

10 In closing, I ask that you look with favor
11 upon the City of Allentown and support the awarding
12 of the gaming license of the Tropicana. Thank you.

13 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

14 Is it Reverend and Dr. Christine Nelson,
15 Lehigh County Conferences of Churches.

16 MS. NELSON: Good morning, gentlemen.
17 Thank you for this opportunity to share the
18 community's sentiment. The Lehigh County Conference
19 of Churches involves 141 churches of every
20 denomination throughout Lehigh County with
21 approximately 70,000 congregants.

22 The Conference of Churches assist 14,000
23 people throughout Lehigh County each year; the
24 poorest of the poor in the county, particularly the
25 hungry, the homeless, people with mental health

1 concerns, and youth at risk.

2 We are a 501(c)(3) and have been in
3 existence for 52 years and expect to be here for
4 another 52.

5 We are concerned about the increasing
6 gambling opportunities as a quality of life and
7 economic issue.

8 The Board of Directors of the Lehigh County
9 Conference of Churches has long opposed organized
10 gambling, publically stating opposition in 1983,
11 1996, and most recently October of 2005.

12 A major survey about gambling and its
13 related issues done by the conference in 1996
14 surveyed 550 church leaders and over 2,100 church
15 members in Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

16 It revealed that the overwhelming majority,
17 nearly 70 percent on most measures, oppose the
18 expansion of gambling, not just on moral grounds but
19 for practical economic reasons. It's those reasons
20 that I come to you today.

21 We do not believe the volume or quality of
22 jobs slot machines will bring to the Valley will
23 improve our quality of life.

24 We heard this morning from Ed Zar that
25 their median pay would be in the \$35,000 range, which

1 includes benefits.

2 Average benefits, myself being a small
3 business owner, is somewhere in the \$7,000 range,
4 which brings the salaries to 28,000.

5 28,000 is barely above Federal property
6 standards for families with three -- of three to four
7 people.

8 In reality, we believe that the bulk of
9 these service workers will be paid somewhere in the
10 10 to 12,000 -- \$10 to \$12 per hour range. This will
11 not enable these workers to afford the average home
12 being built here in the Lehigh Valley at 200 to
13 300,000. Instead, they will add to a housing market
14 already in crisis.

15 Again, the 10 to \$12 per hour according to
16 Federal standards, they should spend about 30 percent
17 of their income on housing, which would yield 520 to
18 \$550 per month. The fair market value of a two
19 bedroom apartment in the Lehigh Valley is \$720 per
20 month.

21 Slot machine workers will go looking for
22 housing, which is already hard to find, that in the
23 50 to \$150,000 range and rental housing.

24 The City of Allentown Section 8 and public
25 housing has been closed for over a year and has a

1 combined waiting list of 5,000 people.

2 I know this because we provide housing
3 assistance for over 2,000 people each year. Workers
4 may come from the suburbs, the townships, and the
5 rural areas; but I hear over and over again children
6 of longstanding Lehigh Valley residents cannot afford
7 to purchase homes in their native townships for
8 nothing is being built to rent or own under \$200,000.

9 Wages of casino workers are in a range
10 where there is already significant competition. If
11 casinos siphon off service workers by offering better
12 salary and benefit packages, where will the leading
13 employers of the Valley acquire their workers;
14 employers such as hospitals, nursing homes,
15 businesses, schools, and assisted lived sites who
16 look for cleaning and maintenance persons, licensed
17 and practical nurses, cooks, and waitresses?

18 If they offer better benefit packages and
19 health insurance, how will this affect Wal-Mart,
20 K-Mart, Target, drug and department and retail
21 stores' ability to hire at current wages.

22 We are told over and over again by small
23 businesses, our legislators and government officials
24 as high up as the Republican candidate for Governor
25 that we must oppose the raising of the minimum wage,

1 citing their belief it will harm some businesses.

2 What will as low as machine operators
3 offering 10 to \$12 an hour do to small business'
4 ability to hire and keep wages and benefits down?

5 Slot machines kill existing local
6 businesses. Within four years of the casino's
7 arrival in Atlantic City, a third of the city's
8 restaurants and retail businesses closed.

9 Other side effects include the loss of
10 healthy recreation opportunities such as bowling
11 alleys, movie theaters, restaurants, and retailers.

12 The rate of our fellow citizens who are
13 uninsured has risen drastically from 28 percent in
14 2001 to 41 percent in 2005, increasing the pressure
15 on our local emergency rooms and free clinics.

16 Casino jobs without health benefits will
17 increase that pressure and cost to the community.
18 Giving health benefits will place further pressure on
19 other employers to provide benefits to compete,
20 thereby increasing business costs.

21 Let us imagine that townships change zoning
22 laws and builders rise to the challenge and begin the
23 building of affordable housing for working people.

24 How will they get to work on Route 22 or
25 78, on Cedar Crest, Tilghman Streets or Airport Road?

1 Transportation is a major barrier in the Valley.

2 Highways are overcrowded.

3 Lanta and bus systems try valiantly and
4 the community is at least entertaining the idea of a
5 mass transit system, but we are years away and
6 casinos will add to the growing traffic problems.

7 We are also concerned about the social
8 effects, crime, addiction and our youth. The
9 National Gambling Impact Study Commission in 1999
10 reported these findings.

11 There is a direct link between problem
12 gambling and an increased incidence of divorce, child
13 abuse, domestic violence, bankruptcy, crime, and
14 suicide.

15 Americans now spend more money gambling
16 each year than on groceries. Yet, 12 million
17 Americans are hungry every day and 23 to 24 million
18 are food insecure, meaning they must cut the size of
19 their meals or skip meals because they have no money
20 for food.

21 Nationwide, there are more than five
22 million pathological or problem gamblers, half of
23 them are young people.

24 According to the National Opinion Research
25 Center at the University of Chicago, another 15

1 million are at risk of becoming problem gamblers.

2 Studies say it takes three years for the
3 social and economic effects to appear. In South
4 Dakota, video poker added \$92 million a year to
5 government coffers but studies reveal increased
6 gambling cost the state 272 million a year in crime,
7 bankruptcies, welfare, and treatment for gambling
8 addiction.

9 In Oregon, the number of Gambling Anonymous
10 Chapters jumped from 3 to 30 within 5 years of the
11 introduction of video poker. I'm told we have one
12 Gambling Anonymous organization in the Valley.

13 Gambling costs society more than the state
14 or municipalities will receive. Gambling fees and
15 license revenues are far outweighed by the increased
16 cost of additional police forces, treatment centers,
17 and prisons needed to contain the criminal element.

18 The Pennsylvania Family Institute finds for
19 every dollar of tax generated by legalized gambling,
20 taxpayers pay \$3 in increased criminal justice costs,
21 social welfare expenses, and infrastructure expenses.

22 Allentown in particular cannot afford to
23 pay or hire more police to deal with increased crime
24 from gambling.

25 Mayor Pawlowski has received a drop in the

1 bucket for what would be needed, \$10,000 annually for
2 5 years to treat addiction will barely support 1 to 2
3 staff members in a program and 250,000 to help
4 employees to become homeowners will assist a mere 20
5 to 30 people.

6 We believe that we should not be doing what
7 everybody else is doing but rather improve -- keep
8 the quality of life of the Valley. Thank you.

9 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, Ms.
10 Nelson.

11 Daniel Bosket, Community Action Development
12 Corporation.

13 MR. BOSKET: Good morning, gentlemen.
14 Thank you for this opportunity to say a few words.
15 My name is Dan Bosket. I'm the Project Director for
16 Community Action Development Corporation located here
17 in the City of Allentown. Our office is located at
18 443 North 7th Street, which we like to call the
19 Gateway to the City, the 7th Street Commercial
20 District.

21 We are a nonprofit agency that focuses on
22 economic development in Center City. We are
23 supported by both public and private funding. Our
24 focus is on neighborhood-based businesses, which have
25 anywhere from 2 to 25 employees.

1 Since it appears that gaming is going to be
2 coming to the Lehigh Valley, we are supporting the
3 economic opportunity that gaming exists for the
4 business clients that we work with the most.

5 In that regard, since we are located here
6 in the City of Allentown, we are supporting the
7 application of Tropicana Aztar to come here to the
8 City of Allentown.

9 We see gaming as an opportunity for many of
10 our clients who have businesses that are minority and
11 women-owned to participate in what will be an
12 economic opportunity that they can't get somewhere
13 else.

14 The Aztar Tropicana has publicly committed
15 to ensuring that they will do business with minority
16 and women-owned business vendors. So we believe that
17 this will actually happen.

18 In that regard, we attended the
19 presentation that they had here at this same facility
20 this past Tuesday where we had our firsthand
21 accounting from a woman who was also a minority
22 business owner, and she recounted her experiences
23 with the Tropicana Aztar at their facility in the
24 midwest.

25 We believe that they will exhibit the same

1 behavior here in the City of Allentown based on the
2 community involvement and community outreach that
3 they have demonstrated so far today.

4 With that being the case and based on what
5 we know so far, we would say that they are supporting
6 the application of the Tropicana Aztar to build a
7 facility here in the City of Allentown. Thank you.

8 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
9 much. That completes our list of community groups.
10 I thank you for your testimony.

11 It also is an appropriate time to break for
12 lunch before beginning our individuals. I know those
13 that are in the batter's circle are raring to go. We
14 will break for lunch now for one hour. We will be
15 returning at the end of our lunch period. We're
16 recessed.

17 (Lunch.)

18 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Would you
19 please take your seats so we can begin.

20 The May 22nd public input hearings at
21 Allentown will now come to order. I'm William T.
22 Simmons, your Presiding Officer today. This
23 afternoon, we'll be hearing from individuals.

24 Our first individual speaker is Jack
25 Cahalan.

1 MR. CAHALAN: Thank you. Good afternoon.
2 My name is Jack Cahalan. I'm the Township Manager
3 for Lower Saucon Township. I would like to speak
4 about the impacts to my township if a casino license
5 is awarded to the City of Bethlehem.

6 Lower Saucon Township is situated south of
7 the City of Bethlehem, and two of the main routes
8 into the city, Route 309 and 378, travel through
9 portions of Lower Saucon Township.

10 The local impact report that was prepared
11 in conjunction with the Sands license application is
12 inadequate in several respects.

13 Number one, the local impact report does
14 not address the traffic impacts to Route 378 and 412
15 south of Bethlehem in Lower Saucon and Hellertown.

16 In addition, we anticipate that the people
17 who will be traveling to and from the casino will
18 start using the township's two lane country road to
19 avoid congestion on Routes 378 and 412, which will
20 increase the traffic, the accidents, and the
21 deterioration of these roads.

22 The township estimates that the additional
23 road improvements needed to handle this additional
24 traffic will cost approximately 3 to \$5 million.

25 Number two, the increase in traffic

1 generated by the casino will also tax our volunteer
2 emergency responders and equipment, who will be
3 called upon to respond to an increased number of
4 traffic accidents, car fires, and potential mass
5 causality incidents due to the increased bus traffic
6 to the casino during peak travel times, which will
7 further tax their chronic shortage of daytime
8 volunteers to respond to these incidents.

9 The township estimates that equipment
10 needed to respond to these incidents will cost
11 approximately \$86,000.

12 Number three, the township is also
13 concerned that the casino operation will cause a
14 decline in sales at our local retail and service
15 businesses, which would result in a decrease in tax
16 revenues to the township.

17 Because these potential impacts have not
18 been fully identified or quantified for the benefit
19 of the municipality adjacent to the proposed casino
20 site, the Lower Saucon Township Council on April 5th,
21 2006 adopted a position opposing the slots casino in
22 Bethlehem out of a concern that if these off-site
23 impacts were not adequately addressed up front, the
24 burden of paying for them would fall on the shoulders
25 of taxpayers of Lower Saucon Township.

1 Although Act 71 speaks about grants from
2 the host county to the municipalities for these
3 costs, our township has no guarantee that this
4 funding will be available or that these expenses
5 would be funded by Northampton County.

6 The township feels that the applicant
7 should be required to identify these impacts on a
8 regional basis and that there should be adequate
9 funding set aside by the applicant to reimburse the
10 affected municipalities for the mitigation of these
11 impacts. Thank you.

12 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
13 much.

14 Guy Lesser.

15 MR. LESSER: I am Guy Lesser. I serve as
16 the Chief of Police for Lower Saucon Township. Our
17 northern border is largely comprised of the City of
18 Bethlehem.

19 As we know, the proposed location of the
20 Sands Casino is in South Bethlehem and, as indicated
21 by the traffic assignment pattern, our areas of
22 Routes 378 and 412 will be impacted by a considerable
23 increase in traffic on a daily basis.

24 These roadways already experience heavy
25 traffic volume during morning and afternoon commute

1 hours and are the roadways that experience the
2 highest number of vehicle crashes by far of any area
3 in our 23 square mile township.

4 The township will also be affected by an
5 increase in pedestrian traffic. It is difficult to
6 assess the impact on the township crime rate and
7 police department.

8 However, it is a certainty that with the
9 steady increase in traffic, crashes will increase as
10 well as the traffic violations, including serious
11 offenses such as driving after imbibing.

12 It is also a certainty that there would be
13 an increase in criminal activities as a result in the
14 increase in traffic and people traveling through the
15 township.

16 For example, Lehigh and Stabler attractions
17 bring people and traffic to the area. During Lehigh
18 University home football games, our alcohol-related
19 incidents increase.

20 The increase of more serious property crime
21 or violent crime may be difficult to predict.
22 However, extensive studies have shown that is
23 reasonable to predict that crime in casino counties
24 increases by 10 percent.

25 We are not the only in the county but as

1 noted on the southern border of Bethlehem, there
2 shall be an impact on Lower Saucon. There shall be
3 additional demands for emergency personnel to
4 respond.

5 The casino is not a one-time event,
6 occasional event or seasonal activity. If approved,
7 it will be a daily impact on our township, which is a
8 very short drive from the casino.

9 As mentioned earlier, Lehigh and Stabler
10 events impact Lower Saucon; and on numerous
11 occasions, they have communicated with our department
12 relative to hiring police officers for traffic
13 control during their events and their paying of all
14 personnel costs to the township. They are a good
15 neighbor.

16 The customers at the casino will cause
17 police officers of our township to respond to vehicle
18 crashes and incidents, thus reducing the time and
19 effort they will spend with the people and taxpayers
20 of Lower Saucon.

21 The casino is clearly a for-profit venture
22 and if they are going to be a good neighbor as is
23 Lehigh Stabler, you will ensure that funds are
24 directed to our township to compensate for the drain
25 they will create on the police department.

1 If we anticipate a 9 percent increase in
2 incidents and utilize that figure in a formula from
3 the PA Governor's Center for Local Government
4 Services relative to municipal police services for
5 2006 for calculating patrol force staffing needs, it
6 results in an increase of one half of a patrol
7 officer. One half of the total cost of the Lower
8 Saucon Township for a senior patrol officer would
9 equal approximately \$41,000.

10 If the Sands Casino is going to be a good
11 neighbor, you will insure that Lower Saucon Township
12 receives an annual figure adjusted for inflation and
13 other influences of at least \$41,000 to be
14 compensated to the municipality only for the
15 increased demand on the police department.

16 We've heard many comments of millions of
17 dollars but we know that none are guaranteed for
18 local communities. Thank you.

19 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr.
20 Lesser.

21 Bob Taetzsch.

22 MR. TAETZSCH: Members of the Pennsylvania
23 Casino Control Board, I am not a member of any group
24 for or against gambling. My name is Bob Taetzsch.
25 I've lived on the north side of Bethlehem for the

1 past ten years as a retiree.

2 My prior work experience was in the fields
3 of industrial engineering, statistics, computer
4 management. During these past ten years, I've grown
5 to love the people and the facilities of the Lehigh
6 Valley Communities of Bethlehem and Allentown.

7 These two medium-sized cities are vibrant
8 and unique. I am not against casino gambling as such
9 but I have -- and I have enjoyed recreational
10 gambling at Las Vegas and Atlantic City a number of
11 times in the past with family, friends, and
12 colleagues.

13 During this time, I've witnessed the dark
14 side of gambling at the casino at Las Vegas with its
15 prostitutes on every street corner at some times.
16 Also, while at Atlantic City, a colleague of mine was
17 -- who went at night was robbed, pistol whipped and
18 almost killed by four thugs. This does not make the
19 local newspapers since it is bad for business.

20 The introduction of casino gambling in the
21 Pocono Mountain recreations area would not disturb
22 me. This is a recreational area but the idea of
23 putting these into medium-sized cities, such as
24 Allentown and Bethlehem, particularly where there's
25 residential areas, such as you have in the south side

1 of Bethlehem, to me is ridiculous.

2 But these cities already have considerable
3 traffic and crime problems. I wonder whether the
4 negative factors associated with the introduction of
5 casino gambling exceed the positive things it might
6 bring.

7 After much reflection, I have come to
8 various thoughts that I would like to share with you
9 today.

10 If I were to ask a hypothetical question,
11 if I were a member of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control
12 Board and has to choose either Allentown east end
13 proposal or the Bethlehem south side proposal, which
14 one would I choose?

15 Regarding the Allentown location, I see no
16 major impact on the residential areas as the casinos
17 would be constructed on a vast non-populated factory
18 industrial area. The major problem of this project
19 would be the traffic, east/west traffic patterns
20 being jammed.

21 Regarding to Bethlehem, there are a number
22 of problems. It being one mile from the Lehigh
23 University, the fact that you have low income
24 populations on both sides of the Minsi Trail Bridge
25 and the residential areas around it, it's ridiculous.

1 Thank you.

2 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
3 Laurie Hayden.

4 MS. HAYDEN: Hi, guys. I want to thank you
5 for the opportunity to address you today. My name is
6 Laurie Hayden. I'll be brief but I hope interesting
7 for you and valuable to this process.

8 I'm sure you've heard of the racehorse
9 Smarty Jones. He's a great little horse. I hope you
10 like him. He's my mother's horse, my mother is Pat
11 Chapman. I guess you could say that I'm Smarty's
12 sister.

13 It might sound like I'm name dropping, but
14 the reason I mention my relationship to Smarty Jones
15 is that you'll understand I'm not actually against
16 all forms of gaming. I'm just not really excited to
17 have casinos come to my home community.

18 It might be fun to have something like this
19 close by, but I believe that we can't really handle
20 this kind of traffic on the south side of Bethlehem.

21 I moved here from Doylestown about ten
22 years ago. One of the things I found so charming
23 about Bethlehem is that it's a city that has very
24 much preserved feel of a small town community,
25 historic community.

1 I live here. I own a business here. I'm
2 proud to be a part of this history in this town. I
3 do a lot of wonderful things in Bethlehem. I
4 especially like to ride my bike. I ride almost
5 everyday. The roads around here are beautiful. I
6 rode about 35 miles yesterday. I'm so proud of
7 myself.

8 When I go across town on my bike or in my
9 car, I'm careful what time I go out. I try to avoid
10 these heavier traffic times, because the population
11 seems to be growing a lot around here and the roads
12 are getting very impacted by that and they're
13 congested.

14 It can take a pretty long time to get
15 somewhere relatively close by. I have to confess
16 that I get frustrated in traffic. I'm like Smarty
17 Jones. I want to go fast.

18 The closer I get to the center of town, I
19 find the worse the traffic gets. The worse the
20 traffic gets, the madder some people get. It's not
21 pretty. I kind of feel unsafe in my car but
22 especially on my bike, and I can't imagine what the
23 traffic would be like if we put a casino on the south
24 side of Bethlehem.

25 Although, I have heard there are plans to

1 widen 412, I can see that -- and that would help
2 people coming from certain directions. There's
3 still, you know, at least three other directions
4 people would be coming from, and those roads, they're
5 getting pretty congested. It's already a frustrating
6 traffic situation.

7 I'm thinking there probably would be a lot
8 of buses. I didn't hear the presentation here this
9 morning, but I bet there would be a lot of buses.

10 I graduated from the University of
11 Pennsylvania. I learned in a marketing course at the
12 Wharton School of Business that of utmost importance
13 in any business is location.

14 It might seem kind of neat to have a casino
15 in a small town historic city, but it's clearly not
16 the best location in this area. The location would
17 benefit from a better traffic access and not be
18 across the street from neighborhoods filled with
19 children and schools.

20 I can't help but think there would be a
21 better location for these casinos. Now, when Smarty
22 Jones raced, there was excitement and hope but it was
23 good breeding, hard work and -- thank you, guys.

24 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: You're welcome.

25 William Hittinger.

1 MR. HITTINGER: Gentlemen, thanks for the
2 invitation to be before you. My wife and I are
3 recent returnees to the Lehigh Valley and live in
4 Moravian Village on Riverwoods Way which looks down
5 upon the old Bethlehem Steel facility and the Lehigh
6 River.

7 I'm speaking as an individual, although
8 from a perspective and viewpoint shared by many
9 people in Bethlehem who I've known for some years
10 leads me to oppose the location of a gaming parlor in
11 our community.

12 My wife and I were born and raised in
13 Bethlehem of parents who were natives as well. We
14 graduated from Liberty High School. Our children
15 attended Bethlehem public schools while we lived and
16 worked here.

17 I graduated from Lehigh University, was
18 later a trustee for some 25 years and served as
19 interim president for one year.

20 We returned to the community after living
21 out of state for many years, at least in part because
22 of the quality of life that has developed during that
23 interim period.

24 Bethlehem has grown in recent years
25 building on its heritage of history, music, and

1 education. In recent times, the emergence of new
2 businesses, many with high technology skills, has
3 provided job opportunities for its diverse
4 population.

5 It is now a community which has attracted
6 new residents who view the quality of life as a
7 significant factor in choosing a place to live.

8 I'm particularly proud of the emergence of
9 Bethlehem south side as a place to live and work.
10 Lehigh University has taken great strides in working
11 with the local community in a partnership to grow
12 into a community of many cultures.

13 With the support of the State of
14 Pennsylvania as an incubator site for new businesses
15 through the Ben Franklin Partnership, just a
16 marvelous commitment on the part of the state some
17 years back, the area now has broad recognition as a
18 model for success.

19 For example, since 1983 when Ben Franklin
20 was established, some 353 new companies in 19
21 counties surrounding the Lehigh Valley, some 10,707
22 new jobs were created, and 18,339 at last report have
23 been retained. That was a report as of the year
24 2005.

25 During 2005, 16 new companies with 67 new

1 products and processes have emerged creating another
2 1,334 new jobs created. So as you can see, there's
3 quite a driving force based upon high technology.

4 Significant growth has been achieved in
5 Bethlehem and surrounds in recent times to the
6 quality of its medical capabilities.

7 Our area hospitals have gained recognition
8 for their quality care and provide employment
9 opportunities for a growing number of population.

10 Now, these significant improvements in the
11 quality of life are threatened by the proposal to
12 build and operate a slots parlor with associated
13 negatives. For example, would parents of prospective
14 students encourage their children to attend local
15 universities in which slots parlor --

16 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
17 much, Mr. Hittinger.

18 Next speaker is Krisen Caison.

19 MS. CAISON: My name is Krisen Caison. I
20 live in Bethlehem Township. I'm against gambling
21 coming to the Lehigh Valley, particularly Bethlehem.
22 What bothers me most is the cannibalization of local
23 business.

24 On February 27th of this year, the Morning
25 Call ran a story about two new restaurants in

1 downtown Easton. The reporter called the mere
2 presence of these new eateries a sign of health in a
3 struggling city.

4 I quote, like Bethlehem's historic district
5 and south side, restaurants are leading the way to
6 economic renewal. New restaurants are one of the
7 first signs of a reviving downtown; but said one
8 restaurant owner, I think it's definitely going to
9 take a commitment on the part of City Council and the
10 Mayor to support critical mass necessary for economic
11 development, unquote.

12 Add a casino to the Valley and what happens
13 to the critical mass necessary for economic
14 development?

15 In the Morning Call on November 6th, 2005,
16 Matt Assad wrote about the casinos in Council Bluffs,
17 Iowa and their effect on business and neighboring
18 Omaha. And I quote, Caniglia's Italian Steakhouse
19 closed its doors in August after 59 years in business
20 in downtown Omaha and owners laid much of the blame
21 on the casinos.

22 Business at Caniglia's dropped 40 percent
23 the year the casinos opened. It seemed that even
24 grandmother's Italian recipes couldn't compete with
25 the casino's buffets.

1 The entertainment dollar is being sucked
2 right into those slot machines said the owner. It
3 was almost like an atom bomb was dropped, because
4 every family restaurant within four or five miles was
5 devastated, and I unquote now.

6 Under normal market conditions, a
7 restaurant culture like the one germinating in Easton
8 and the one perking along in Bethlehem is a delicate
9 and valuable thing.

10 Given a chance to develop, it creates a
11 classy downtown, the kind I like to visit. But bring
12 in a neighbor so awash in profits that it can afford
13 to throw away money on expensive scale models of its
14 project, bring in a competitor that will lure 4 to 6
15 percent of the local population to gamble 15 times a
16 year, play the slot and you stop it cold.

17 Bring in a competitor like that and you
18 have just welcomed a bad neighbor to the hood. You
19 can see that some citizens in Lehigh Valley would
20 welcome gambling.

21 To those of us who don't want it, those
22 citizens have said, so you don't have to gamble but
23 just don't tell us what to do.

24 I would just love to just let and let live;
25 but even if I never reach out and touch the gambling,

1 it will reach out and touch me by hallowing out the
2 town where I live and sucking away dollars from
3 businesses that, thanks to their initiative,
4 imagination and variety, deserve to succeed.

5 Too many of us don't want gambling here.
6 Please hear us. Thank you.

7 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
8 much.

9 Charles Luthar.

10 MR. LUTHAR: Thank you, gentlemen. I'm
11 happy to speak to you this afternoon. My name is
12 Charles Luthar. I'm the Borough Manager in the
13 Borough of Hellertown, Pennsylvania. You heard from
14 our representatives from Lower Saucon, my colleagues
15 from Lower Saucon Township, and we share many of the
16 same kinds of issues.

17 We're concerned about revenue sharing.
18 That's our real issue here. The borough is a
19 community of 5,600 people with a population that has
20 a large percentage of elderly, about 25 percent of 65
21 years or older.

22 Bethlehem is immediately to our north, I-78
23 forms a border with Hellertown and the City of
24 Bethlehem. We're a good mile away from where the
25 casino would be located if the Sands proposal is

1 approved.

2 We are officially as a borough neutral on
3 the casino. We're not saying we're for or against
4 the casino, but we are concerned about the revenues
5 that we need to get in order to keep our police and
6 our municipal services in line with the increased
7 traffic we expect to see.

8 I'm not a traffic engineer; but according
9 to the statistics from the Sands Casino, 55 to 60
10 percent of the traffic that will be going through
11 this development will be coming from I-78, which,
12 again, is on our border. That means about 11 to
13 14,000 additional cars a day, if my calculations are
14 correct, coming along that interstate, which already
15 has about 20,000 cars a day of traffic.

16 This does mean additional costs to road
17 maintenance at the northern part of our borough. It
18 causes additional congestion. We already have
19 concerns about accidents in the area and pedestrian
20 traffic in our downtowns.

21 If people are directionally challenged like
22 I am, they'll make a turn in the wrong direction and
23 head into Hellertown. Hopefully, they'll stop to buy
24 something. Lacking that, they may very well cause us
25 additional congestion problems.

1 Again, we're not against the casinos. We
2 just want to make sure that we are recognized as
3 another adjacent community, which we didn't hear too
4 much about earlier this morning.

5 If the casino is selected, Sands Casino is
6 selected for the casino license, there will be a
7 great number of new employees. We look forward to
8 seeing those employees actually move into the
9 borough. It's a great place to raise family and have
10 children.

11 However, we do need to have some
12 assurances, again, that they're going to be
13 corresponding revenue sharing that is going to help
14 us because, again, the demographics are against us
15 with a large elderly population.

16 We also have an excellent school system.
17 Saucon Valley School District is among the best in
18 the state. However, school taxes only account for
19 about a third of the cost of educating a child in
20 Saucon Valley. We do need help in that area as well.

21 I know there are some benefits from Act 71
22 that are going to benefit the school districts, but
23 we need something other than promises. We need
24 certain assurances that the casino operators will
25 help and the county will help in giving us a fair

1 share of the revenue.

2 The revenue is, of course, for the demand
3 for police services, fire, ambulance, public work
4 services. A good percentage of our calls already on
5 the emergency services are due to accidents on I-78.

6 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
7 much, Mr. Luthar.

8 Randall Johnson.

9 MR. JOHNSON: Good afternoon. My name is
10 Randy Johnson. I'm speaking as an individual against
11 Boyd Gaming being presented a gaming license to
12 operate a casino in Limerick Township.

13 I'm concerned about statements from a
14 budget hearing dated Wednesday, March the 1st, 2006
15 of this State Gaming Control Board.

16 Senator Mary Joe White expressed concerns
17 about the use of state troopers in the casinos and
18 said, and I quote, I'm concerned that diverting 100
19 troopers to stand in the casinos is going to mean
20 that they're not on the roads protecting citizens.

21 Chairman Decker replied that the Board
22 wants to, and I quote, establish an environment of
23 enforcement in the casinos particularly when they
24 first open to, again, I quote, let criminals know
25 that they are not welcome.

1 My concerns as a Limerick citizen mirror
2 that of Senator White. I am concerned that this
3 Board would consider using the tax dollars of
4 Limerick citizens to be diverted to any gaming
5 facility for the purpose of letting criminals know
6 that they are not welcome.

7 It is obvious to me from this statement
8 that the presence of a casino in a community is
9 expected to bring an increase of crime or criminals
10 to an area.

11 If our state troopers are establishing an
12 environment of enforcement at the casinos, then who
13 is establishing an environment of enforcement on our
14 roads and highways?

15 I feel the responsibility to establish an
16 environment of enforcement should be the burden of
17 the owners of each gaming facility and not the burden
18 of unprotected local residents and businesses.

19 My second area of concern is with the local
20 fire companies in the Limerick area. According to
21 Fire Chief Don Balonski, the primary responding fire
22 company to the casino is Lynnfield Fire Company and
23 not Limerick as stated in the Boyd impact study.

24 The impact study further stated that the
25 Lynnfield Company is an all volunteer force that over

1 the years substantially declined. According to Chief
2 Balonski, the Lynnfield Fire Company has a daytime
3 average force of only five volunteers.

4 Is it reasonable to expect an all volunteer
5 fire company whose response time would be at its
6 lowest during daytime operations, to provide service
7 to a casino complex housing thousands of visitors
8 daily?

9 What might happen if an evacuation is
10 required? Is it reasonable to expect an all
11 volunteer fire company to successfully evacuate the
12 proposed 15,000 daily visitors in the casino complex,
13 plus the patrons in a 600 room hotel, plus the
14 thousands of additional people shopping at the
15 adjacent Philadelphia Premium Outlets and the nuclear
16 power plant, which is less than a mile from the
17 projected site?

18 As good as our volunteer fire company may
19 be, I feel the approval of Boyd's application for a
20 gaming facility in Limerick would place an
21 unrealistic expectation on all of our volunteer fire
22 departments, as well as could potentially harm
23 patrons visiting the area and residents living in
24 Limerick and the surrounding communities. Thank you.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

1 Mr. Alfred Siess, Jr.

2 MR. SIESS: Al Siess, Upper Saucon
3 Township, Lehigh County, individual. My comment
4 today concerns specifically the considerable negative
5 impact of increased road traffic on the Lehigh Valley
6 economy and quality of life which would result from
7 licensing of slots casino in either Bethlehem or
8 Allentown.

9 Lehigh and Northampton Counties' and
10 especially Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton, road
11 systems are seriously overburdened at present. The
12 congestion is spreading rapidly to surrounding
13 counties and there is no available rail alternative.

14 Main roads serving the region, Routes 22,
15 I-78, 309, 222, 378, and 33, are either already
16 congested, 22 and 309 undergoing rebuilding, 222 and
17 are facing extensive pressure from new developments,
18 Routes 33 and I-78.

19 Even without the casino traffic, Route 22
20 would require an expenditure of in excess of \$1
21 billion and a planned construction period as long as
22 21 years to widen the road in seven segments.

23 With either casino, the traffic would reach
24 crisis proportions and additional roads would be
25 impacted. Route 412, American Parkway, etc. would

1 require rebuilding.

2 Under any possible scenario, the
3 restoration of passenger rail service to the three
4 cities, Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton, will be
5 imperative.

6 The widening of Route 22 will only lead to
7 more congestion. No license for gaming should be
8 granted here unless the applicant commits to funding
9 the restoration of passenger rail service to
10 Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton.

11 Additionally, planning for funding and
12 building new public rail systems serving the three
13 cities should be in place prior to any widening of
14 Route 22 or construction of any new highways here.

15 Even more important than any negative
16 impact such as increased traffic or burden on social
17 services, etc. is the essential need for the Board to
18 properly investigate the character of any applicant
19 for a gaming license.

20 The Board must take the necessary time to
21 perform background investigations. Licenses must not
22 be transferrable to new owners without reapplication.
23 No licenses should be awarded to any corporation or
24 entity with prior felony convictions. Thank you.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very

1 much.

2 Mr. Lamont McClure.

3 Miss Cibele Glazer.

4 MS. GLAZER: Good afternoon. My name is
5 Cibele Glazer. I'm a resident of Limerick Township.
6 I'm here to speak about my reasons for opposing the
7 Boyd casino proposal.

8 Limerick is not a destination spot for
9 adult entertainment. It is a family-oriented
10 community in the suburbs. Boyd's proposed location
11 is immediately adjacent to the Exelon nuclear power
12 plant, which by no stretch of the imagination would
13 be considered a tourist destination.

14 Residents who live in the area are aware of
15 the inherent risks of living near a nuclear plant.
16 Many were issued potassium iodine pills in the event
17 of an accidental exposure to radiation.

18 Exelon has just informed us that they plan
19 to store spent fuel in above ground casks. I am sure
20 they intend to take every precaution, but we are all
21 aware that human error is always a possibility.

22 I have included the PEMA Limerick fact
23 sheet which shows that the population at risk in the
24 event of a radioactive incident is in excess of
25 245,000 people.

1 The logistics of evacuation would be
2 further complicated with a casino. Another factor to
3 take into account is our post 9/11 environment.

4 We've been told as a nation to be more
5 vigilant and report security risks. Boyd's original
6 impact report estimates up to 5.8 million visitors a
7 year once fully operational.

8 This does not include visitors to an
9 adjacent outlet mall. It is hard to understand how
10 that number of people in such close proximity to a
11 nuclear plant would not be a security risk.

12 I've included two reports done this year by
13 the United States Government Accountability Office
14 regarding design basis threat, which indicate that
15 improvements with regard to security issues are still
16 needed.

17 It is understandable that many of the
18 security measures taken at nuclear plants will be
19 highly confidential and not available to the public.

20 However, it would be unfair for the state
21 to increase risk and add to the already heightened
22 security level in the area by adding a casino.

23 Add a security cost at the plant and the
24 Pottstown Airport could ultimately be passed onto the
25 citizens.

1 It is also imperative that our local,
2 state, and Federal Government officials, whether
3 elected or appointed, give the safety of the citizens
4 the utmost priority.

5 For these reason, I respectfully request
6 that you deny Boyd Gaming a license for casino in
7 Limerick. Thank you.

8 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
9 much.

10 Charles Fuller.

11 MR. FULLER: My name is Charles Fuller.
12 I'm a resident of Palmer Township, which is located
13 about six to seven miles east of Bethlehem.

14 I thank the Gaming Control Board for this
15 opportunity to express my thoughts and opinions
16 concerning casinos, more specifically, casinos
17 proposed for the Lehigh Valley.

18 The Lehigh Valley has evolved into a
19 regional metropolitan area experiencing quality
20 economic development. We must be honest with
21 ourselves, you and us, in recognizing that any major
22 development in any of the individual municipalities
23 has a dramatic effect on the whole of the Lehigh
24 Valley.

25 The thoughts and opinions I'm about to

1 express are for the sole purpose of helping you make
2 brave and wise decisions based on the knowledge you
3 are gaining from these hearings.

4 My conclusions are rooted in the following
5 life experiences. I'm a Christian who has grown to
6 trust God for material provisions.

7 I have served both in elected office and
8 appointed office as a member of the Palmer Township
9 Board of Supervisors and its Planning Commission.

10 I, therefore, substantially understand the
11 critical importance of these hearings. I always
12 considered the public welfare of citizens in my
13 community in the evaluation process of developers'
14 self-centered proposals.

15 I stand here today and state emphatically
16 that I am an opponent of legalized gambling. Having
17 stated that, I also know your task is to award
18 stand-alone casino licenses based on hours of
19 testimony, as well as the honorability and integrity
20 of those seeking such licenses.

21 I do not see decisions for casinos in the
22 best -- in the Lehigh Valley being a win/win
23 situation either for the citizens of the Commonwealth
24 in general or the citizens of the Lehigh Valley
25 specifically if the license is awarded here.

1 How can you as a Board fulfill your own
2 stated mandate, that of protecting the people of the
3 Commonwealth, when those who are seeking licenses
4 speak of increased security for numerous reasons
5 around their casinos?

6 At a recent press conference, which I
7 attended, even the local and state legislatures,
8 county executive and city mayors stated they had
9 worked out an agreement to share the proposed wealth
10 if either Bethlehem was awarded a license.

11 They stated the purpose of this agreement
12 was to mitigate the damages the city or county might
13 suffer from such award. I commend John Stoffa,
14 Northampton County Executive, for beginning his
15 remarks by stating rather emphatically he was not in
16 favor of the casino in Northampton County, that being
17 Bethlehem, but that he had to do whatever it took to
18 lessen the negative impact.

19 Damages that need to be mitigated or
20 negative impacts are solid reasons not to award a
21 license in Northampton Count in particular or
22 anywhere else.

23 Before you award a casino license in this
24 state, are you willing to take the responsibility of
25 just one child is left homeless or one suicide is

1 committed because of the compulsive behavior that
2 casinos admit to?

3 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
4 John Lexo.

5 MR. LEXO: Members of the Pennsylvania
6 Gaming Control Board, I thank you for the opportunity
7 to speak to you today. My name is John Lexo. I live
8 in Upper Saucon Township, which is just south of
9 Bethlehem.

10 I'm one who has grown up in the Lehigh
11 Valley for the past 52 years and stayed due to the
12 quality of life it offered.

13 More importantly, I come with the
14 perspective of a small business owner who makes his
15 living traveling the area roads to get to my
16 customers every day.

17 I understand the political and practical
18 reality that casino gambling may be coming to this
19 Valley.

20 Among my concerns is the lack of planning
21 and preparation, especially in the area of traffic
22 burdens to the hundreds of thousands of people living
23 here.

24 This area is growing very quickly, and I
25 personally experienced how it is taking longer and

1 longer to get from one point to another, which has a
2 definite effect on what I can accomplish in a day and
3 the prices that I need to charge.

4 By adding the volume of traffic expected
5 from the casino, I am convinced that many areas will
6 be clogged to the point of gridlock. Bethlehem will
7 be slowly choked by the stranglehold of traffic,
8 congestion, and frustration will increase and the
9 quality of life will decrease. That will hurt most
10 small businesses and residents alike. I don't think
11 it will help the casino revenues either.

12 Whenever I do a project, I must visit the
13 site and the customer, ask a lot of questions, and
14 look for things that could be a later cost surprise,
15 estimate the cost and impact of the work for my
16 customers.

17 How can the state proceed with licensing
18 casinos without independent, professional traffic
19 studies along with your personal involvement in order
20 to understand cost and impact?

21 Also, since the primary benefactor is the
22 casino, who will pay for the access they will benefit
23 from?

24 I ask you to avoid the hurry up and wait
25 syndrome. This must be done right from the very

1 beginning because the impact is long term.

2 It affects hundreds of thousands of people
3 that live in this Valley and it's not an easy, fast
4 fix afterwards.

5 I request each of you travel all of the
6 roads leading to the proposed site, not just the one
7 from 412, 78 during morning and afternoon commute
8 times and engage qualified, independent traffic
9 engineers to assess and recommend alternatives that
10 will not choke our residents and businesses before
11 you make your decision.

12 Thank you very much and you guys have a
13 real tough job. I really feel for you. Thank you.

14 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
15 Dianne Lexo.

16 MS. LEXO: Good afternoon. Thank you for
17 your time. Yeah, I'm Dianne Lexo. I live in Upper
18 Saucon Township. I lived in the Lehigh Valley my
19 whole life.

20 The traffic congestion has increased
21 significantly in that time. I am a retired nurse
22 with roots that run very deep in Bethlehem. My
23 extended family consists of kids, kids, and more
24 kids, who I care deeply about.

25 I drive all over the Lehigh Valley for the

1 purpose of volunteer work and to help my son with his
2 business, as well as just normal purchasing consumer
3 power.

4 Please, please, please, I strongly urge you
5 to commission the state to hire and pay for two or
6 three independent consultants, independent being the
7 strong word there, to do traffic impact studies to
8 assess and forecast the obvious traffic impacts of
9 any Pennsylvania casino proposals, and especially to
10 identify any unintended consequences to the city and
11 to people who have already invested their lives and
12 their finances in Bethlehem.

13 Everyone who travels west on I-78 between
14 Hellertown and 309 will complain about the traffic
15 conditions, and all of the towns and the boroughs
16 like Hellertown are already congested.

17 Please carefully study the very real
18 impacts that snarled traffic around a major
19 entertainment venue will have, not only for their
20 customers but the local people and all of the small
21 businesses and especially the city services such as
22 police, fire, rescue workers, hospitals.

23 I am opposed to the placement of any casino
24 entertainment venue in Bethlehem. I would prefer it
25 wouldn't be in the Lehigh Valley at all. Thank you

1 very much for your time.

2 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you.

3 Rodney Hawthorne.

4 MR. HAWTHORNE: Good afternoon. My name is
5 Rod Hawthorne. I'm the Township Manager of Lower
6 Pottsgrove Township located in Montgomery County.
7 Lower Pottsgrove Township is the immediate neighbor
8 to the west of Limerick Township, the site of the
9 proposed Boyd gaming facility.

10 I'm not here to oppose or praise the
11 project, but since Boyd Gaming is a first class
12 casino developer and operator, we in Lower Pottsgrove
13 Township must anticipate their securing a gaming
14 slots license and therefore look out accordingly for
15 the best interest of Lower Pottsgrove Township and
16 the resulting impacts of that facility on our
17 township.

18 That being said, let me orientate you to
19 the facility and its relationship to our township of
20 Lower Pottsgrove. This facility will be developed
21 only 600 feet from the Limerick/Lower Pottsgrove
22 boundary. The sole, immediate access road proposed
23 to the gaming site is located in Lower Pottsgrove
24 Township.

25 The entrance way to and exit from empties

1 into Lower Pottsgrove on Evergreen Road. In the
2 short, we in Lower Pottsgrove are a true impact
3 municipality contiguous to the host site.

4 Accordingly, Lower Pottsgrove Township
5 wants the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board to
6 recognize its -- in its deliberations and
7 adjudication this issue to ensure that Lower
8 Pottsgrove Township can avail itself fully to secure
9 the maximum grant funding opportunities statutorily
10 granted to Lower Pottsgrove under 1403 of Act 71.

11 One must recognize the fact that Limerick
12 hosts the facility site structure while we in Lower
13 Pottsgrove host the traffic entering and exiting the
14 site.

15 Let me now discuss with you the highlights
16 of the direct impacts on Lower Pottsgrove Township
17 and the needs Lower Pottsgrove Township will face
18 from the resulting development of a gaming venue just
19 600 feet from the township.

20 If Boyd Gaming facility is approved on the
21 proposed site in Limerick Township, its presence
22 would greatly impact the already, overburdened Lower
23 Pottsgrove Township budget, our existing resources
24 and infrastructure. Increased demands for public
25 services, our police, fire, highway departments, and

1 ambulance service and administrative personnel, will
2 result in additional budgetary consideration for
3 manpower, equipment, maintenance, and other material
4 uses.

5 The arrival of the gaming facility and all
6 that goes with it and to our community will greatly
7 affect the quality of life and standard of living in
8 Lower Pottsgrove.

9 This buildup of once tranquil farmland to
10 uses demanded by the casino and clientele will be
11 devastating to our residents unless the requisite
12 attention is given to the necessary funding needs in
13 Lower Pottsgrove.

14 Accordingly, I would submit that Lower
15 Pottsgrove Township is truly an impacted contiguous
16 municipality to the proposed licensed facility as
17 defined and designated in Act 71, Section 1403. I
18 have submitted to your staff for inclusion into the
19 record -- thank you.

20 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
21 William LaSalle.

22 MR. LaSALLE: These are not speaking notes.

23 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: As long as you
24 can do it in three minutes.

25 MR. LaSALLE: My name is William LaSalle.

1 I reside in Upper Pottsgrove, Montgomery County and I
2 work in Limerick Township.

3 On December 20th, 2005, Boyd Gaming Company
4 sneaked into our town and brought Limerick Township a
5 December Christmas surprise.

6 We did not know what was in their package
7 until their impact statement was made known to the
8 public only three months ago, less than a week before
9 the deadline to sign up for these hearings.

10 It did not take long for Limerick residents
11 to realize that this December surprise gift from Boyd
12 was a bag of coal.

13 I'm here today representing 200,673
14 residents of Limerick and surrounding communities who
15 signed a petition calling upon public officials to
16 reject casino gambling in Limerick.

17 Copies of all of the signatures will be
18 given to your secretary. There is a summary of the
19 breakdown of numbers by township residents, which you
20 should have in your hands.

21 Reasons given in the petition for rejecting
22 the casino are summarized as follows: The proposed
23 casino will create a significant increase in traffic
24 on the transportation infrastructure that cannot
25 adequately handle the current volume.

1 The proposed casino will border the nuclear
2 power plant at Limerick raising concerns related to
3 safety, security, and evacuation planning.

4 The proposed casino will negatively impact
5 many local businesses within the 35-mile feeder area
6 as dollars spent in the slot machines will not be
7 spent in the local economy.

8 Reliable academic research shows that the
9 presence of gambling casinos increases the numbers of
10 problem gamblers leading to an increase in crime,
11 bankruptcies, abuse, and a host of other social and
12 economic problems and costs.

13 The proposed casino will negatively affect
14 the quality of life and family environment that the
15 Limerick area currently enjoys.

16 To put it in a different way, to place a
17 casino in Limerick would be like your family living
18 in a small upstairs apartment, having someone without
19 your permission give your child a pet St. Bernard dog
20 as a Christmas surprise present.

21 It might come with a pretty bow and lots of
22 promises of fun but it is costly. It does not fit to
23 your life situation.

24 On behalf of 200,673 citizens of Limerick
25 and the surrounding communities, we say no thank you

1 to Boyd's December surprise.

2 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr.
3 LaSalle. And would you make sure that not our
4 secretary but our clerk, Mickey Kane, gets a copy of
5 your petition.

6 Sharon Wiles-Young.

7 MS. WILES-YOUNG: Good afternoon. My name
8 is Sharon Wiles-Young. I'm a resident of the City of
9 Bethlehem for over 15 years and I work on the south
10 side at Lehigh University.

11 I'm here today because I feel compelled and
12 obligated to speak about the gambling industry or the
13 gaming industry coming to the Lehigh Valley.

14 I've attended Bethlehem City Council forums
15 on gambling and recently came across research on
16 casinos.

17 We should ask the fundamental question, do
18 we want our local community, such as the Lehigh
19 Valley, to become a member of an addiction based
20 economy.

21 Mark Cooper recently wrote in his Atlantic
22 monthly article about the slot machine business,
23 this new generation of gambling machines has
24 predictably produced a new generation gambling
25 addicts and most of slot machine profits come from a

1 relatively small percentage of players, the
2 compulsive and the addicted.

3 He and other researchers state there is no
4 strategy to beat the slot machines other than just
5 not playing.

6 Over the long run, the only choice a player
7 has is how to lose his or her money. The slots
8 machine run by computers are preset by law to pay
9 back a certain percentage of the money taken in. For
10 example, in Atlantic City, it is set at 83 minimum
11 pay back or 17 percent is held for the casino.

12 Marten Jensen, nicknamed the Doctor of
13 Gambling, who wrote the book Beat the Slots,
14 calculates that playing only 25 percent -- 25 cent
15 per spin on a machine with a 9 percent pay back will
16 cost a gambler \$12 an hour.

17 Is the Lehigh Valley ready to support its
18 economy using this money? Have we truly explored
19 other options such as attracting more businesses from
20 the surrounding states that have double or triple the
21 tax rate when compared to Pennsylvania?

22 Shouldn't Pennsylvania have something to
23 offer businesses from New Jersey and New York or as
24 we've heard today the I-78 corridor? We have high
25 tech businesses. Let's get more in the area.

1 Nando Pelusi, a psychologist, wrote in
2 Psychology Today that gambling plays on at least two
3 human universals, the urge to get something for
4 nothing and the difficulty of giving up that dream no
5 matter how high the stakes or odds are against it.

6 We know these problems, the Sands and Aztar
7 brought it up this morning about responsible
8 gambling. They are ready to take that on.

9 I think we should be ashamed to prey on
10 addicts and be ashamed of having a hand in producing
11 more gambling addicts, or maybe we do not have to be
12 ashamed because whatever happens in the Lehigh Valley
13 stays in the Valley.

14 Please consider what can happen to
15 surrounding restaurants and hotels as casinos give
16 out their coupons to invite customers stay at their
17 facilities and spend more time at the casino.

18 I urge you to think of other economic
19 models for our community. I urge you to take all of
20 these points very seriously before you turn the
21 Valley into a gambling town. Thank you for listening
22 to my comments.

23 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
24 much.

25 Bridget George.

1 Let me remind those that the numbers you
2 have on your lapels, please sit in the corresponding
3 seats up front so that our usher doesn't have
4 difficulties locating you. Thank you.

5 MS. GEORGE: My name is Bridget George, and
6 I thank you for listening. My husband and I now live
7 in Moore Township, Northampton County, but we lived
8 for 21 years on the south side of Bethlehem and
9 raised two other children there.

10 I have worked in Bethlehem for 30 years,
11 first as the co-founder of Touchstone Theater on the
12 south side of Bethlehem and for the past nine years
13 as the Executive Director of the world renowned Bach
14 Choir of Bethlehem founded in 1898.

15 I speak as an individual since neither of
16 these institutions has a position statement on gaming
17 in Bethlehem but my work informs my topic, which is
18 the conflict of a casino with Bethlehem's culture and
19 quality of life.

20 A casino may bring short-term economic
21 growth, but in the long term it will detract from and
22 deter the kind of community and economic development
23 by which Bethlehem has forged and continues to forge
24 its own unique path to success as an innovative and
25 health community.

1 I'm a passionate proponent of Bethlehem as
2 a city that gives extraordinary testimony to the
3 American dream with the position of its historic
4 Moravian settlement, its numerous fine educational
5 and cultural institutions, and the fragile but
6 vibrant and diverse South Side culture built by
7 immigrants who came here initially to work in
8 Bethlehem Steel, a city built on honest hard work and
9 creativity, and not on a money engine that depends on
10 people losing money and people who can't afford to do
11 so.

12 Today's subheading in the Morning Call
13 stated that the opposition of the faithful have been
14 silenced. I go on the record of saying that the
15 faithful have in no way been silenced; and by the
16 faithful, I do not mean just the churches. I mean
17 the thousands of people from all walks of life who
18 have spoken eloquently against a casino on the form
19 of Bethlehem Steel land.

20 In the faithful, crude, exemplary business
21 leaders like John Howl of First Valley Bank now Bank
22 of America who spoke to Northampton County on the
23 shortsightedness of thinking that a casino is good
24 for community and economic development in the long
25 term.

1 I appreciate the architectural integrity of
2 Bethlehem Steel but we must hold out against
3 Newmark's insistence that a plan can only materialize
4 with a casino.

5 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
6 much.

7 Kimberly Mitman.

8 MS. MITMAN: Hello. I'm Kimberly Mitman.
9 I live in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Unlike a lot of
10 the people here today, I bring something unique to
11 the table. I have experience with this.

12 I lived in Delaware 13 years ago when the
13 law was passed to bring slots to the racetracks
14 there. In fact, my parents own a house 400 yards
15 from the entrance to Delaware Park in a business
16 across the street from Delaware Park.

17 So when this process began in Delaware, no
18 one was more concerned than my family. Along with
19 other business owners on that same block, which
20 included a restaurant -- include still, a restaurant,
21 a pizzeria, a convenience store, they waited
22 anxiously to what would happen after the slots
23 arrived.

24 Unlike the projections and the dire
25 warnings, there was not increased crime. There is

1 not still increased crime in that area. I talked to
2 my dad yesterday just to confirm all of this.

3 There was an increase in traffic, but
4 Delaware did a very good job in planning and it has
5 not had a negative effect.

6 We watched friends and neighbors get jobs.
7 We watched the businesses on that block flourish.
8 They're all still there today. They're more
9 profitable than ever.

10 Now, I live in Bethlehem. I've been here
11 for over ten years. I consider it my adopted home.
12 I love living here. I started a small business here.
13 I'm active in the community. I've been part of the
14 network of young professionals for three years.

15 I'm involved in the Renew Lehigh Valley and
16 in discussions on College Valley and the brain drain.
17 The brain drain topic specifically interested me
18 because I have several friends who have left the
19 Valley and I some that have stayed.

20 One of the biggest complaints is that the
21 Lehigh Valley has good jobs but that it is not an
22 attractive place for young people to live, and a big
23 part of that is because it is too spread out. There
24 is not a centralized place for young people to
25 congregate. That has started in Bethlehem, on the

1 south side of Bethlehem. There have been new shops
2 and new restaurants, first Fridays, and spring on
3 4th. It's been an excellent thing.

4 I urge you to accept the BethWorks Now
5 proposal to bring a casino to Bethlehem. Not only
6 will you be saving a major part of the history of
7 this area that I have come to love very much, they
8 have been looking to help someone save this for ten
9 years. How long should we wait?

10 Not only will you be solving that problem,
11 you'll be helping to contribute to the present
12 revitalization currently going on in Bethlehem; but
13 you will also be helping to secure the future of the
14 Lehigh Valley by giving young people a centralized
15 place to congregate, a social center that will have
16 shops, restaurants, theaters.

17 Unlike the other locations that are being
18 proposed here, there's already that beginning in the
19 south side of Bethlehem. I think that is the best
20 location, and I urge you to accept it. Thank you for
21 your time.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
23 much.

24 Reverend Will Harstine.

25 MR. HARSTINE: Good afternoon. I am a

1 retired Moravian church pastor and a former seminary
2 teacher. I lived at the edge of Bethlehem for 39
3 years. I also represent the Citizens for a Better
4 Bethlehem.

5 I have witnessed many trends over these
6 years and have come to appreciate the city's unique
7 history and it's strong cultural significance to
8 mid-eastern Pennsylvania.

9 I stand here to openly oppose organized,
10 professionalized, glamorized gambling in the City of
11 Bethlehem.

12 There are many reasons to oppose the casino
13 in Bethlehem and I think most of them have already
14 been mentioned.

15 Although the economic pluses for gambling
16 sound compelling, they do not factor in the tragic
17 human costs of such a venture.

18 Promises that gambling will provide the
19 money to restore the brownfield left by Bethlehem
20 Steel are basically advanced by outsiders whose chief
21 interest lies in the profits to be made.

22 These promises are not worth the risk we
23 will be taking, a risk of large, social problems soon
24 to follow, chronic addiction, personal bankruptcies,
25 broken families, and increasing suicides.

1 I would ask you now to focus your attention
2 to an unusual monument that you see every time you
3 visit the city center of Bethlehem or the Bethlehem
4 Public Library, right downtown on Church Street.

5 The impressive monument that stands in the
6 open plaza has three tall arching pillars that meet
7 in the middle and then spread out at both the top and
8 the bottom.

9 The three pillars represent the values upon
10 which our city was built by a group of dedicated and
11 industrious Moravians who named the city in 1741 and
12 who developed it into a model community of its day.

13 Now, these three pillars are religion,
14 education, and industry. I would submit to you that
15 gambling with its reliance upon chance and its lack
16 of a principled vision would undermine all three
17 pillars that have represented our city for well over
18 200 years.

19 Is that our future? Rather than see the
20 monument become an empty symbol of the past, I urge
21 that gambling be kept out of Bethlehem and that the
22 leaders look to more fruitful ways to respect
23 religion, deepen education, and broaden industry. I
24 thank you for your attention.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

1 Mary Lou Hemmerly.

2 MS. HEMMERLY: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Mary Lou Hemmerly, and I live in downtown Bethlehem
4 on Spring Street. My husband, William Hemmerly, was
5 born and raised on the south side of our town.

6 He attended all Bethlehem Schools, Moravian
7 College and received his medical degree from Temple
8 Medical School.

9 We have always lived in Bethlehem and we
10 raised four children here. I'm telling you this
11 because we learned at some of the rallies people were
12 bussed in from other communities. They were paid to
13 come. They were handed t-shirts and signs.

14 The gambling interests from Las Vegas have
15 spent a great deal of money for publicity, making
16 extravagant promises.

17 Why are they doing this? Not because they
18 care one iota for our town. They are proposing this
19 gambling parlor to take money out of the city and
20 into their pockets.

21 The grandiose promises from Las Vegas
22 people are just that, promises without substance. At
23 Packer and Montclair Avenue on the south side of town
24 is the Fritz Memorial Methodist Church.

25 The mission of this church has largely been

1 to serve the neighborhood and its needs. We have a
2 homework club three days a week to help the children
3 with their school work.

4 On Fridays, we have a Bible club. During
5 the summer, the South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center
6 has a six-week day camp meeting at the church.

7 We work at the food bank. We work at the
8 thrift shop and at the meal center. These efforts
9 are to improve the lives of those living in the area.
10 Not many are members of the church, for we believe we
11 are our brother's keepers.

12 Unfortunately, the very people who can
13 least afford to gamble are often attracted to it in
14 the hopes of winning big.

15 With Lehigh University located near the
16 proposed gaming location, it becomes a great
17 temptation. The case in point being the young
18 student who was desperate enough about his gambling
19 debts to rob a bank.

20 Northampton Community College will soon
21 have a large branch on Third Street near the proposed
22 location for a slot machine parlor. Parents are
23 going to think twice about sending their children to
24 these institutions.

25 It seems grossly unfair that our

1 legislature voted gambling in without our consent.
2 We should have had an opportunity to vote.

3 Remember, the vote from City Council was
4 not unanimous but 4 to 3 to put the proposal in the
5 hands of the Zoning Board. Many people --

6 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
7 much, ma'am.

8 MS. HEMMERLY: Keep it out of Bethlehem.

9 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Michael Long.

10 MR. LONG: Thank you for your presence here
11 today. I'm Michael Long. I'm present here today to
12 speak in strong opposition of the proposed gaming
13 site in Bethlehem, that being the Sands BethWorks
14 site.

15 I'm a local business person, owner and
16 operator of the Long Funeral Home, as well as an
17 investor in real estate in this fine community of
18 Bethlehem.

19 At many presentations, the BethWorks Sands
20 developers have indicated that they do not only plan
21 to develop gaming space in the BethWorks site but
22 also plan significant retail and residential space in
23 their project.

24 I believe that Bethlehem has survived and
25 thrived after the demise of Bethlehem Steel in great

1 part due to the local businesses and professionals in
2 the area.

3 These investors and entrepreneurs have
4 developed a new economy to establish Bethlehem as the
5 shining star in the Lehigh Valley.

6 With the introduction of Beth Sands Works,
7 two factors will significantly affect the local
8 businessperson.

9 One, given that any local economy has a
10 limited revenue from its population and that
11 significant revenue will be required from local
12 residents to fuel the BethWorks gaming revenue, this
13 diversion of spending power from other businesses to
14 gambling will cause significant stress on several
15 types of businesses.

16 Secondly, the Bethlehem Works Sands intends
17 to compete directly with local businesses in the area
18 of retail merchandising, hotel and lodging, and
19 restaurant services.

20 Sands BethWorks Now intends to dominate
21 these areas in Bethlehem. This will displace many
22 other businesses in Bethlehem, which employ
23 residents, invest in the community and enhance the
24 economic landscape of Bethlehem.

25 Specifically in the downtown Bethlehem area

1 and on Bethlehem's south side, restaurants generate
2 retail spending which supports local businesses after
3 the workday.

4 This in turn supports property values,
5 occupancy rates, and enhances a community which draws
6 businesses to locate there.

7 Any local economy is a network of
8 interdependent components. The unique stresses that
9 Bethlehem Works Now, the Sands project will place on
10 Bethlehem's economic landscape will be irreversible.

11 To my understanding, the Aztar proposal
12 does not include this type of collateral build out of
13 retail and restaurant services that is to be included
14 in the Sands proposal.

15 It is for this reason that I strongly urge
16 the endorsement of a proposal other than that of the
17 BethWorks Now Sands site. Thank you.

18 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
19 Jane Gaughran?

20 Jane Gaughran. No?

21 Edwin Rodriquez.

22 Mr. Rodriquez, would you do me a personal
23 favor and remove your hat?

24 MR. RODRIQUEZ: Sure.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you.

1 MR. RODRIQUEZ: You're welcome. Good
2 afternoon. We have been experiencing a crime wave of
3 robberies lately, crime, violence, murders, car
4 thefts, domestic violences, burglaries, auto thefts,
5 property thefts and damages, graffiti, drug and
6 alcohol addictions, gambling additions, increased
7 congestion problems. Most of the problems come from
8 elsewhere, for our town didn't have most of what is
9 happening recently.

10 The Interstate highways, especially I-78,
11 has had numerous accidents caused by vehicles causing
12 massive congestion problems for miles and miles, and
13 drug trafficking on I-78 has increased.

14 Recently, a certain city was aired on
15 television as having many financial changes. Let's
16 be realistic. That doesn't happen everywhere.

17 By chance, that city might not have as much
18 of a criminal element as has been born into our
19 cities and regional areas.

20 Drug dealers and criminals see Bethlehem,
21 Allentown, and Easton as quiet neighborhoods where
22 one might consider not looking -- not locking the
23 doors at night or leave their porch light on.

24 That's all changed now, for drug dealers
25 come with their negative ways and corruption to bring

1 on the weak and murder by day or night.

2 I'm going to stop here and reference to
3 that because I want to go into something else. First
4 of all, PennDOT has submitted plans for the 378
5 southbound and East Broadway to make those traffic
6 patterns into one ways.

7 We're already experiencing heavy congestion
8 problem in that area. We don't need anymore of it
9 because we have -- when vehicle accidents happen in
10 these areas, especially in the five points area, and
11 on eastbound or westbound Third Street, especially
12 the westbound side, what happens is is that
13 everything comes at a standstill.

14 Emergency vehicles are not able to come out
15 of there freely. That's a heavy problem. Fire
16 engines or trucks are not able to have accessibility
17 to that area on a timely basis.

18 The other thing is from out of experience,
19 I am a recovered addict, not recovering. I am a
20 recovered addict for 15 years already.

21 Out of experience, I state that I'm more
22 familiar with what is happening from Hay Street, I
23 don't know whether you gentlemen are familiar with
24 that area, but from Hay Street to East Third Street
25 onto the alleyways and all streets leading up to and

1 down East Fourth Street and back on to the Five
2 Points area, particularly, and out of experience
3 those are particularly all negative.

4 That's the opposite side of where they are
5 proposing the casino. I have that experience to know
6 this. I travel those streets every single day. I
7 make my comments here because I definitely do not
8 want casinos because it's going to bring more
9 negativity and social ills to our environment. Thank
10 you.

11 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
12 much, sir.

13 Thomas Maxfield.

14 MR. MAXFIELD: My name is Thomas Maxfield.
15 I'm a resident of Lower Saucon Township. I also
16 serve as an elected official.

17 Recently, I, like my council members, voted
18 on a resolution to officially oppose the proposed
19 casino site in Bethlehem.

20 While I can appreciate the struggle of
21 Bethlehem to establish a stronger tax base, I do not
22 think it should occur at the expense of or on the
23 back of its neighbors.

24 Municipalities in the Lehigh Valley have a
25 long history of shoving ugly, troublesome, or

1 nuisance uses to the edges of their borders forcing
2 neighboring communities to deal with the negative
3 impacts. This is what is being proposed, once again,
4 by the City of Bethlehem.

5 The Sands Casino site is proposed for the
6 edge of Bethlehem's municipal boundary, wedged
7 between the three smaller communities of
8 Freemansburg, Hellertown, and Lower Saucon Township.

9 If this site is selected, the local roads
10 and highways, the emergency police and fire services,
11 and the small businesses in Lower Saucon Township and
12 other surrounding communities may be stressed beyond
13 the financial ability of the communities to cope.

14 I-78, which is already carrying double the
15 amount of predicted truck traffic, will become even
16 more dangerous and more of a nightmare to travel on.

17 The corridor of Route 412 that stretches
18 past the I-78 interchange and to the casino site will
19 be crowded and hazardous as Lehigh Industrial Park
20 Six is developed and its traffic merges with the
21 buses and cars from casino attendees, as well as
22 tractor trailers and other IESI Bethlehem Landfill
23 traffic.

24 Emergency, fire, and police services in
25 Lower Saucon have already assured us, the Council,

1 that additional personnel will be required to address
2 the expected increase of incidents resulting from an
3 area casino for medical emergencies to traffic
4 accidents to crime.

5 The added cost of medical coverage and
6 equipment needed to keep forces operational may be
7 more than we can afford.

8 One thing that we can be sure of, a casino
9 in Bethlehem will alter our local communities both
10 negatively and permanently. We may no longer enjoy
11 the low crime rates, quiet streets, or public safety
12 that we are accustomed to and that many of us have
13 moved here for.

14 A casino will bring in a transient
15 population who will not be interested in our culture,
16 our historic sites, or our quality of life.

17 We will not even benefit from their
18 tourism, because the casino will offer everything
19 that a patron would need from the moment they leave
20 the bus until they step back on.

21 The illusional statement that small
22 businesses will benefit from the additional thru
23 traffic is the cruelest hope to local small
24 businessmen, who are already struggling.

25 Indeed, studies have documented the

1 deleterious effects to local shops, stores, and
2 restaurants.

3 The hardest thing for Lower Saucon
4 residents to swallow is that they will receive none
5 of the positive effects of tax base strengthening.
6 All that we can look forward to is planning for how
7 to keep with the inevitable negative impacts.

8 I strongly oppose the location of the Sands
9 Casino in Bethlehem. I remain hopeful for the future
10 of Lower Saucon Township and for its way of life. I
11 hope the Gaming Board will come to the same
12 conclusions that we have. Thank you.

13 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
14 Noah Macy.

15 MR. MACY: Good afternoon. My name is Noah
16 Macy, and I'm a resident of Limerick Township. I'm
17 addressing the Board today to urge you not to grant a
18 slots parlor license to Boyd Gaming.

19 I would like to talk about how a casino
20 would affect the families of Limerick and surrounding
21 towns.

22 Like many other families, I and my wife
23 moved to the Limerick area because it is family
24 oriented and it is a good place to raise children.

25 There are a large number of families with

1 children in the area, which is evidenced by the fast
2 growing population of school-aged children and the
3 many new schools that have been and are being built
4 in the Springford Area School District in the past
5 few years alone.

6 Research has shown that proximity to the
7 casino results in higher rates of gambling addiction.
8 Minors are also more susceptible to gambling
9 addiction than adults.

10 Note that many youth who gamble have
11 claimed to do so on slot machines regardless of its
12 legality.

13 Although several economists have shown that
14 the costs of gambling outweigh the benefits by at
15 least three times, many of these costs have not yet
16 been fully quantified because crimes of gambling
17 addicts against their families often go unreported to
18 the authorities.

19 Secondly, the proposed Boyd Casino in
20 Limerick is designed to serve only the local
21 population.

22 While this will provide an entertainment
23 outlet for some, it will also deplete dollars
24 available to family-owned small businesses,
25 especially in the entertainment and dining sectors.

1 Thirdly, local gambling will undermine
2 parents trying to teach their children to be
3 responsible, to work hard, to economize and save
4 money.

5 Casino gambling teaches that one does not
6 have to work hard, learn a trade or get a college
7 education but that you should instead deposit your
8 hope and personal potential in unlikely jackpots.

9 To close, I would like to quote Act 71 of
10 2004, Section 1102(10). The public interest of the
11 citizens of this Commonwealth and the social effect
12 of gaming shall be taken into consideration in any
13 decision or order made pursuant to this part.

14 A casino does not fit in with the
15 family-oriented aspect that draws many people to
16 settle in Limerick. There are hundreds of families
17 in the township who have made their public interest
18 known by petition as was evidenced before.

19 Again, I ask that you not grant Boyd Gaming
20 a slots parlor license in Limerick. Thank you for
21 your attention.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
23 Marilyn Hartman.

24 MS. HARTMAN: My name is Marilyn Hartman,
25 and I live in the City of Bethlehem. Thank you for

1 hearing me out. Let's talk.

2 It's not an easy job that you have. We're
3 all counting on your sound mindedness and discernment
4 to make a decision because you're definitely not
5 going to make everyone happy. You're always going to
6 have someone that is going to be unhappy with you.

7 Of course, the best thing then would have
8 been if you didn't have any licenses to grant. In
9 that case, we wouldn't have to be here but then again
10 you wouldn't have a job so that wouldn't be too good
11 for you either.

12 So since we are here and you do have to
13 make a decision and who to grant that license to, I
14 would like you to really, really consider the
15 economic impact of those licenses in the communities
16 that have requested for them.

17 I am here representing a community within
18 the community of Bethlehem. I'm a Latina. I'm a
19 female Hispanic. According to the National Gambling
20 Impact Study, it does indicate that some communities
21 have found that forms economic renewal through
22 gambling; but it also warns us that there are costs
23 associated with those decisions. Those costs must be
24 evaluated and that gambling cannot be a cure-all for
25 all economic problems.

1 I submit to you that that is the case with
2 the City of Bethlehem. It is not the economic
3 solution that we need.

4 You see, all indications say that and the
5 studies of New Mexico University along with other
6 studies and you've heard studies left and right and
7 you're probably bored with all of the studies, and
8 I'm sure the Board Members that are not here are
9 furiously reviewing all of the hearing testimony that
10 have been given in the past hearings.

11 So all I want to say is four things. The
12 studies indicate that the prevalence and pathological
13 gambling is significantly higher among Hispanics.

14 They also indicate that the highest impact
15 reported on any category was on female Hispanics. It
16 is also stated that the addiction rates double within
17 50 miles of the community. You hear that over and
18 over again.

19 There was a Latino study done here in the
20 Lehigh Valley commissioned by the Lehigh Valley
21 Economic Development Corp. It found that among the
22 Latino women, there was the highest level of poverty
23 and good comments of the feminization of poverty.

24 Well, the proposed site for the Bethlehem
25 casino is not within 50 miles. It's within walking

1 distance of the largest concentration of Latinos that
2 we have in Bethlehem. I am one of them.

3 I would like you to consider that it is not
4 a good site for a casino. Now, I oppose a casino on
5 moral issues. I oppose gambling on moral issues.

6 I'm not here to debate that. You've heard
7 enough debate on that. I'm here to say consider the
8 long-term effects, I'm not talking five, ten years.
9 I'm talking about a generation from now what that
10 would do to the most growing population in the Lehigh
11 Valley in Bethlehem. Thank you.

12 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
13 much for your testimony.

14 Bruce Haines.

15 MR. HAINES: Good afternoon. My name is
16 Bruce Haines. I'm both a downtown resident and a
17 private business owner in Bethlehem.

18 My wife and I invested in and moved to
19 Bethlehem from Pittsburgh during the past decade due
20 to the wonderful historic character of this
21 community.

22 We watched with interest the Bethlehem
23 transformation from a steel town to a highly
24 desirable historic community, anchored by Moravian
25 College and Lehigh University bracketing the

1 downtown.

2 Quaint private shops and restaurants
3 characterize Bethlehem's landscape in between these
4 two college campuses.

5 Bethlehem has become a highly desirable
6 alternative to big city living in New York and
7 Philadelphia because of the quality of life we offer.

8 Unfortunately, the gaming legislation that
9 was rushed into law threatens the very character and
10 fabric of small historic class III cities like
11 Bethlehem by establishing Category II licenses.

12 The casino development as proposed in the
13 heart of downtown Bethlehem would radically change
14 the very character of this now special college town
15 with its extremely low unemployment rate.

16 Existing private and family businesses will
17 be jeopardized competing with a hotel, restaurant,
18 and shops heavily subsidized by the massive profits
19 generated from within the casino operation.

20 Existing business owners and their
21 employers will be cannibalized in Bethlehem at the
22 expense of this unfair competition.

23 This has been the experience in other
24 casino communities other than those located in virgin
25 wilderness sites or in resorts.

1 As you have heard today, the casino
2 proposal for Bethlehem has sharply divided what was
3 previously a very harmonious community.

4 Despite what you may have previously heard
5 from its politicians, a casino is not embraced by the
6 Bethlehem community.

7 Fortunately, the legislature created the
8 Gaming Control Board to protect communities like
9 Bethlehem.

10 I urge you to consider the negative impact
11 to Bethlehem's quality of life brought about by an
12 additional 30,000 people a day passing through our
13 community to go to the BethWorks property.

14 I urge you to consider the material injury
15 to existing business owners, such as myself, who
16 stepped forward to make the necessary investments to
17 preserve and enhance this community during the
18 darkest hours.

19 I urge you to consider the lost revenues to
20 the more logical and less intrusive casinos
21 appropriately sighted in the Poconos and
22 Philadelphia, both less than a one hour drive for
23 Lehigh Valley residents.

24 I urge you to preserve Bethlehem's image as
25 the Christmas City, which is totally incompatible

1 with a casino town.

2 Finally, I submit that the gaming
3 legislation was never intended to introduce casinos
4 into the middle of wholesome thriving communities.

5 We acknowledge the casino license may be
6 appropriate for re-energizing resort communities,
7 provide economic stimulus for horseracing, or jump
8 start economically depressed communities.

9 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
10 much, Mr. Haines.

11 Jo Ann Haines.

12 MS. HAINES: I have a different story. My
13 name is Jo Ann Haines. I live a mile from the
14 casinos.

15 My hometown is Wheeling, West Virginia.
16 Ten years ago, a casino was built in Wheeling, West
17 Virginia in the middle of a community almost
18 identical to what the BethWorks Now site is being
19 proposed.

20 One year after that casino was built, I
21 have a cousin there who mysteriously filed
22 bankruptcy.

23 Our family gathered around this woman and
24 her family until we learned that she had become an
25 addicted gambler.

1 She has the story of every addicted
2 gambler. She went from a girl scout leader and a
3 softball coach to a liar and a thief. It is very
4 plain and simple. It was very ugly.

5 She lost her job of 17 years. She
6 ultimately lost her home. Her husband divorced her.
7 He had to move out of the state of West Virginia
8 because he really couldn't deal with all of the
9 problems that came from her gambling addiction.

10 She moved in with my mother, my dear, dear,
11 sweet aunt and she continued to gamble. Yes, we did
12 intervention. Yes, we went to all of the help,
13 Gambling Anonymous, everything that we possibly
14 could.

15 The bottom line is she stole \$30,000, my
16 aunt's entire savings. At the end of my aunt's life,
17 which was only one year ago, my cousin was stealing
18 her drugs and selling them on the streets for
19 gambling money.

20 Please when you consider where you're going
21 to put these casinos, remember, this woman, my
22 cousin, would never have been in a casino if she
23 couldn't walk there.

24 She walked every day, one half mile with a
25 dollar, with a quarter, with anything she could steal

1 to go to the casinos.

2 It is a detriment to those people whose
3 lives are risked living on top of this casino to put
4 it there. You have a very difficult task. I
5 understand your job.

6 But please, please, a casino belongs in a
7 resort where it is a game in the middle of the
8 community with people's lives. It is not a game.
9 Thank you very much.

10 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you.

11 William Diehl.

12 Okay. We'll need the following individuals
13 to please stand and raise your right hands.

14 Valeria-Nina Tatlow, Dianne Berlin, Everett Bickford,
15 Lamont McClure, and Sis-Obed Torres Cordero.

16 Raise your right hands. Do you solemnly
17 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to
18 give in these public input hearings will be the
19 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so
20 help you God?

21 THE WITNESSES: I do.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: All right. You
23 may be seated.

24 Miss Tatlow.

25 MS. TATLOW: Hello. My name is

1 Valeria-Nina Tatlow. I'm honored to have the
2 opportunity to come and stand before you, and I
3 recognize the great privilege we have as Americans to
4 give our input into the process that goes on into
5 making these decisions somewhat.

6 I'm a resident of the south side of
7 Bethlehem. As I look out the back window of my home,
8 I can see Bethlehem Steel. I used to watch the crane
9 operate. I used to see men as I walked along those
10 streets personally working down there in the steel 19
11 years ago when we first moved here as a freshman at
12 Freedom High School.

13 I saw Bethlehem Steel operating. I saw my
14 neighbors getting up and going to work every day and
15 I saw them coming home. I know the people that
16 worked there. I know the children that were raised
17 in the south side.

18 They went to school with me. They learned
19 right alongside with me. I am back in Bethlehem
20 after 11 years of not living in the city, but it will
21 be 3 years now that I'm back in town.

22 I have four children of my own. It's for
23 them that I'm here speaking, for them and all of the
24 other children on the south side of Bethlehem, who
25 currently have a high crime rate, one that is widely

1 under reported.

2 I personally have had bicycles stolen from
3 my back porch, a back porch that is not easily
4 accessible. It's in an alleyway. You have to enter
5 my backyard, climb my back stairs, move things around
6 because I thought they were semi-safe on my back
7 porch.

8 My car has been broken into along with
9 several neighbors of mine. Other neighbors have had
10 windows broken out. We have graffiti. The children
11 are on the streets because their parents, hopefully,
12 are working.

13 You want to bring a casino to my town to
14 give these people more jobs, that's great. We need
15 jobs but the kind of jobs that a casino are going to
16 offer, what hours are these parents going to be
17 working? Who is going to be watching these children?

18 We already have a problem in the south
19 side. We have drugs. We have robberies. We have
20 crime. We don't need more.

21 You have heard all of the studies. It's
22 common sense. More will come. South side needs to
23 be fixed. It does not need a problem added to a
24 problem.

25 Why gamble with my children's future to

1 preserve our past? I say to those interested in the
2 Bethlehem Steel property, build it. They will come.
3 Bethlehem does not need a casino. The south side of
4 Bethlehem does not need a casino.

5 You do not need to put a casino in the
6 middle of two housing developments, two drug addict
7 centers, in the lower social economic development
8 area of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

9 Three minutes is not a long time to talk as
10 my yellow light goes off, but I can walk from my
11 front door to the casino, five minutes from the front
12 door of our local elementary school to a casino.

13 Those children will not be gambling today,
14 maybe not tomorrow, but 10, 15 years from now and
15 where will they be while their parents are either
16 working or gambling away their future?

17 I will beg of you not in my name, not in my
18 backyard, not in my town. Thank you.

19 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
20 much.

21 Dianne Berlin.

22 MS. BERLIN: My name is Dianne Berlin. I'm
23 coordinator for Casino Free Pennsylvania. This
24 statement represents the collective voice of groups
25 and individuals who have grave concerns about the

1 proposed casinos here in Pennsylvania.

2 Background checks are still not completed,
3 yet employees are still working. You are also
4 awarding some related licenses.

5 Gambling is no ordinary business. It's
6 crucial that every step is treated with as much
7 caution as one would with a nuclear power plant.

8 Your name is also the mandate to control,
9 not accommodate, the gambling interests. The
10 community groups and individuals already put on the
11 defensive need and want to be treated with respect
12 and consideration.

13 As long as the slots applicants can change
14 their applications, we are asking for new hearings to
15 be held no sooner than two months after the final
16 changes to the applications so that citizens and
17 communities can give testimony relevant to those
18 changed applications.

19 In addition to the independent traffic
20 impact studies you are having done, we are requesting
21 that two other equally important independent studies
22 be completed before any further licensing is done.
23 Independent means no connections with gambling
24 interests, period.

25 First, independent environmental impact

1 studies following the attached outline. Second,
2 specific independent studies on the impact on social
3 systems delivery infrastructure.

4 We also request that a panel of independent
5 academic experts on computers and gambling equipment
6 be assembled to prove beyond a doubt that the slot
7 machines and any of the related equipment, including
8 the computer system, are not fraudulent or able to be
9 manipulated.

10 The possibility of remote manipulation of
11 any of this equipment poses serious concerns.
12 Ordinary citizens need to understand just how these
13 electronic gambling devices and equipment work before
14 one penny is allowed to be wagered.

15 We are also requesting written responses to
16 all citizens correspondence with this Board, and
17 Casino Free Pennsylvania requests a moratorium on all
18 hiring until all background checks are completed and
19 a moratorium on all licensing at least until all
20 studies are completed and until a minimum of two
21 months after the newly elected legislature and
22 Governor are installed.

23 Erring on the side of caution in these
24 efforts may help prevent more costly mistakes and
25 possible future litigation for all concerned,

1 especially the taxpayers of Pennsylvania who were
2 excluded from the legislative process of Act 71.
3 Thank you.

4 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
5 much.

6 Everett Bickford.

7 MR. BICKFORD: My name is Everett Bickford.
8 I'm President of Stevens Park Safe Neighborhood
9 Association. I'm also on the Weed and Seed Steering
10 Committee here in Allentown, serve as the Chair of
11 the Human Services Committee and the Executive
12 Director of the oldest Halloween parade in America.

13 As a resident and community leader, there
14 are many needs in Center City, Allentown, more police
15 on patrol, safer parks for our children.

16 Stevens Park has failed the last four
17 safety inspections in the last three years. Small
18 businesses will prosper from safer streets and being
19 invited to do business with Aztar.

20 Also, community morale here in Allentown is
21 at an all time low as program after program is either
22 cut or curtailed.

23 Seniors' social programs, pools of
24 unlimited hours, parks are understaffed and
25 undermaintained, community events cutback, if not

1 totally eliminated.

2 Community groups or i.e. block watch groups
3 and local neighborhood associations cannot afford to
4 pick up the slack, because with the cutbacks comes a
5 need for those groups to provide liability insurance
6 for any other events, which is hard for a lot of the
7 smaller groups to provide.

8 Aztaar has proven their track record of
9 community involvement. Thirty-two of their employees
10 serve on 32 various boards back in Evansville. They
11 serve in groups from seniors to toddlers.

12 As a pastor and a Chair of the Human
13 Service Committee, I am concerned about the social
14 impact a casino has on a community.

15 I grew up in New Jersey. I watched
16 Atlantic City go from a very prosperous town where we
17 used to have our church conventions to a town where
18 they would no longer have their church convention.

19 I don't see that with Aztaar. I see Aztaar
20 as one community, a very community-involved casino.
21 I see a caring organization that is there for the
22 community that they're involved with.

23 I see high positive visibility in the
24 community. I see Allentown citizens growing and
25 prospering. I see parks safe, again, for children to

1 play in.

2 In closing, I ask the Commission to grant
3 Allentown and grant Aztar the license, grant seniors
4 and families and children alike a better vision for a
5 better city. Thank you.

6 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.
7 Lamont McClure.

8 MR. McCLURE: Commissioners, thank you for
9 granting me the opportunity to come here and present
10 to you today.

11 My name is Lamont McClure. By day, I'm an
12 attorney. By night, twice a month, I'm a member of
13 the Northampton County Council.

14 On March 2nd, 2006, the Northampton County
15 Council passed the following resolution:

16 Whereas, the Bethlehem Sands proposal to
17 build a gaming facility as part of a large multi-use
18 development on the site of the former Bethlehem Steel
19 plant in South Bethlehem has the support of the
20 Bethlehem City Government.

21 Last year, Northampton County residents
22 testified at two public hearings in the City of
23 Bethlehem on the proposal, the largest and most
24 expensive public input process in any Pennsylvania
25 community.

1 After those hearings, Bethlehem City
2 Council voted to support the BethWorks Sands
3 development proposal. That proposal is also strongly
4 supported by the Mayor of Bethlehem, John Callahan.

5 Whereas, the BethWorks Sands proposal
6 continues the original development vision that was
7 put forth after the Bethlehem Steel went out of
8 business nine years ago to take the vacant, decaying
9 steel buildings, and turn them into a large multi-use
10 destination development.

11 The BethWorks Sands proposal is the best
12 opportunity to maintain that vision and successfully
13 redevelop the 124 acre brownfield site.

14 Whereas, Northampton County Council
15 supports the BethWorks Sands application for a
16 Pennsylvania Class II gaming license, because the
17 proposal and plan submitted to the Pennsylvania
18 Gaming Control Board will speed the redevelopment of
19 the old Bethlehem Steel plant, bring a substantial
20 number of jobs to Northampton County, expand training
21 opportunities at Northampton Community College, help
22 to expand ArtsQuest, and to help save the historic
23 nature of the old Bethlehem Steel site.

24 Now therefore, let it be known that
25 Northampton County Council supports gaming as part of

1 a major, urban brownfield redevelopment project and
2 is in support of the BethWorks Sands proposal. This
3 resolution passed by a vote of 7 to 2.

4 I'm not here to speak for my colleagues.
5 I'm here to speak as an individual today. I would
6 like to take a minute, which I see I have left, to
7 explain to you why I came to support this resolution.

8 The original purpose of Act 71 and its
9 enabling legislation Act 72 was to give Governments,
10 local Governments, the opportunity to reduce property
11 taxes in their municipalities, localities and in
12 their local school districts.

13 We see a historic opportunity in
14 Northampton County and in the City of Bethlehem to
15 take some of the money that the Governments will be
16 entitled to and actually begin the process of
17 reducing our citizens' property taxes.

18 You don't hear the City of Bethlehem when
19 they come to you asking you to throw them a lifeline.
20 Bethlehem doesn't need a lifeline. They are not
21 asking you to bail them out of any financial crisis.

22 We have an opportunity to enact the
23 original purpose of Act 71 and its enabling
24 legislation and that's reduce property taxes. That's
25 why I'm here before you today. Thank you very much

1 for your time.

2 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you.
3 That will conclude our individual testimony for
4 today. We have other community groups that we will
5 hear from, Sis-Obed Torres Cordero.

6 Sir, you will have ten minutes to give your
7 presentation. The yellow light will come on when you
8 have 30 seconds.

9 MR. CORDERO: Good afternoon. My name is
10 Sis-Obed Torres Cordero. I reside here in Bethlehem.
11 I have served as Executive Director of the Council of
12 Spanish Speaking Organizations of the Lehigh Valley
13 for 11 years. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
14 organization.

15 We're against the gambling casino in South
16 Bethlehem. Your gamble, if approved, will further
17 crack our community, destroy Latino businesses,
18 churches, add crime and spear forward gentrification.

19 Gambling in South Bethlehem will introduce
20 a new addiction on a mass scale that will affect
21 thousands of people.

22 Presently, we have people in our community
23 who are addicted to heroin, crack, cocaine, liquor,
24 marijuana and the esoteric chemical drugs as well.

25 Treatment is scarce and expensive. About

1 40 percent of our population lacks health coverage.
2 It is both underinsured and uninsured.

3 Addictions lead to poor health, increased
4 health costs, stress, domestic violence, increased
5 drug use, consumption of more alcohol, and the
6 general demise of the family.

7 The Council has the only Hispanic senior
8 center in the city or Northampton County. Every day
9 we have two domino tables going, four gentlemen
10 playing at a time, another eight or nine men
11 clustered around the players watching.

12 If a casino opens here, I can hear them say
13 in Spanish - speaking Spanish - let's go down there
14 for a little bit and play instead.

15 But what will happen is that all of these
16 gentlemen will go down there and return broke. Their
17 faces will not be imprinted on the money that will be
18 lost.

19 Politicians tell us that casinos will
20 increase jobs for our people. This is hypocrisy at
21 its best.

22 Most Latinos in the community are renters.
23 Presently, a developer is completing 12 new townhomes
24 on Evan Street. They are being advertised for sale
25 in the upper 200,000. Latinos in our community will

1 not be able to own homes on non-union wages.

2 The word gentrification is hiding behind
3 the pyramid that you find on the back of the American
4 dollar. It is Market Forces and the invisible hand.

5 Without urban planning, we will not get
6 urban renewal. Instead we will get minority removal.
7 Crime exists in South Bethlehem. A casino will
8 increase crime.

9 If 10 percent of the expected 3 million
10 people a year commit a crime in Bethlehem, there will
11 be an additional 300,000 crimes. Per capita, that
12 amounts to four crimes per every man, woman, and
13 child in our city. How far will the new \$20 million
14 go to the county and the city to pay for that?

15 As a member of the Lehigh Valley Economic
16 Development Latino Task Force, our charge is to
17 create a plan to increase the wealth of Latino
18 communities in the Lehigh Valley.

19 Picture the Lehigh Valley as a long
20 balloon. If you squeeze it in the middle, the
21 balloon will bulge at both ends. The Latino
22 community in South Bethlehem is forced to Allentown,
23 Easton. Who and how will Allentown and Easton absorb
24 a migration of thousands of Latinos to those cities?

25 It has taken the better part of ten years

1 for Latino businesses to blossom in South Bethlehem.
2 When the people go, they will go. The Latino
3 churches will go, and we will also be forced to
4 migrate, too.

5 However, please understand that we will not
6 go away silently. If you decide to bring a casino to
7 Bethlehem, we will make decisions measured to take
8 action to preserve our community.

9 Please vote against a casino in Bethlehem.
10 The Latino community and the people of this city will
11 not become complicit partners in the destruction of
12 our own community. We will fight to keep it whole.

13 Our organization is 38 years old. We
14 provide over 50,000 units of services to people. We
15 provide services to anyone and everyone who qualifies
16 who is low income. We provide almost 2 million units
17 of services in 38 years in this community.

18 This community has been cracked
19 politically. It's cracked economically. This thing
20 here that is coming here is going to be like a Trojan
21 horse. The gentrification is coming in. They're
22 going to force our people out. Please don't be a
23 part of this. Thank you.

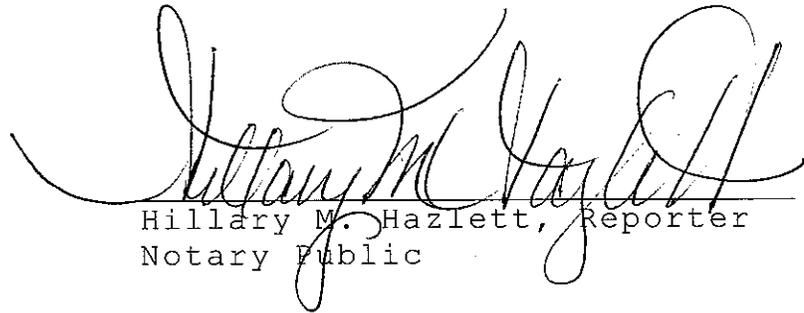
24 PRESIDING OFFICER SIMMONS: Thank you very
25 much, sir.

1 That concludes our public input hearing for
2 today. The hearing is now adjourned.

3 (The hearing concluded 2:30 p.m.)
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I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me on the within proceedings and that this is a correct transcript of the same.


Hillary M. Hazlett, Reporter
Notary Public

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Notarial Seal
Hillary M. Hazlett, Notary Public
City Of Harrisburg, Dauphin County
My Commission Expires Sept. 29, 2007
Member, Pennsylvania Association Of Notaries

<p>\$</p> <p>\$1</p> <p>[1] 102:20</p> <p>\$1.7</p> <p>[1] 51:8</p> <p>7</p> <p>57:21 72:10</p> <p>10,000</p> <p>[1] 77:1</p> <p>\$12</p> <p>[4] 72:10 72:15 74:3</p> <p>119:16</p> <p>\$150,000</p> <p>[1] 72:23</p> <p>\$20</p> <p>[1] 161:13</p> <p>\$200,000</p> <p>[1] 73:8</p> <p>\$3</p> <p>[1] 76:20</p> <p>\$30,000</p> <p>[1] 147:15</p> <p>\$35,000</p> <p>[1] 71:25</p> <p>\$41,000</p> <p>[2] 85:9 85:13</p> <p>\$5</p> <p>[1] 80:24</p> <p>\$525</p> <p>[1] 48:16</p> <p>\$550</p> <p>[1] 72:18</p> <p>\$6,800</p> <p>[1] 51:12</p> <p>\$7,000</p> <p>[1] 72:3</p> <p>\$720</p> <p>[1] 72:19</p> <p>\$750,000</p> <p>[1] 51:11</p> <p>\$86,000</p> <p>81:11</p> <p>0</p> <p>39:20</p> <p>\$92</p> <p>[1] 76:4</p>	<p>[1] 3:4</p> <p>10:30</p> <p>[1] 9:20</p> <p>11</p> <p>[3] 97:12 149:20 159:13</p> <p>1102(10)</p> <p>[1] 140:10</p> <p>112</p> <p>[1] 3:5</p> <p>114</p> <p>[1] 3:6</p> <p>116</p> <p>[1] 3:7</p> <p>1187</p> <p>[1] 31:20</p> <p>119</p> <p>[1] 3:8</p> <p>12</p> <p>[2] 75:16 160:23</p> 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