



Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board



FILED
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Board Clerk PGCB

WRITTEN COMMENT TO BE INCLUDED IN THE EVIDENTIARY RECORD OF THE PUBLIC INPUT HEARINGS

I request that the following comments be made part of the public input hearing record and considered by the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board prior to awarding licenses for slot operators:

Name: Rev. Thomas J. O'Hara, C.S.C.

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Organization, if any: King's College

Employer: King's College

COMMENTS: (Please use second page if more space is required)

My name is Father Thomas J. O'Hara, C.S.C., and I serve as President of King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. I thank you for this opportunity to comment on the application of Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs. I think your work is crucial, for as much as we want to encourage tourism in Northeastern Pennsylvania, we need to have your Board act on behalf of all citizens of the Commonwealth to insure that any gaming activity is well regulated and not a source of individual or societal problems. The reality is that gambling always has the potential to have a negative impact on individuals, families or communities.

As a college president and a priest, I have observed carefully the emergence of Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs. There is no doubt in my mind that our area of Northeastern Pennsylvania can be on the verge of a remarkable economic comeback. There are signs that decaying cities are coming to life and there are additional signs that our greatest natural resource--our beautiful environment of rivers, mountains, streams and state parks is attracting more and more tourists. This renaissance is enhanced by the collaborative efforts of so many sectors of our community, business, political, educational and non profit. I can state without qualification since Mr. Soper and his colleagues of Mohegan Sun first arrived within our community, they have impressed me with their desire to be strong participants in rejuvenating our community.

Comments: Page 2 (continued)

Yet as priest and college president, my questions on gaming persisted. I asked Mr. Soper about the stance and policies of Mohegan Sun concerning problem gambling. I was very pleased to receive a binder of over one hundred pages that carefully outlines the nature of compulsive and problem gambling, the potential individual, societal and economic costs and then, most importantly, the plan of Mohegan Sun to address this potential problem. The plan includes training for every Mohegan Sun employee so that they may implement steps taken to recognize and combat problem gambling. The plan includes a process for referral of problem individuals to qualified treatment professionals. The plan calls for printed materials to be posted and made available for all patrons. The plan calls for procedures that aggressively monitor for underage gambling and alerts employees to patrons who due to excessive alcohol may gamble irresponsibly. Finally, Mohegan Sun has plans to be actively involved in educating middle and high school students on adolescent vulnerability to substance abuse and gambling addiction.

All of these resources indicate that Mohegan Sun is committed to addressing an issue that concerns me and others. I am impressed by their concern for this potential problem. I am deeply impressed by the steps they have taken to address this concern. Individual actions of patrons can never be completely controlled. But Bobby Soper and his colleagues at Mohegan Sun understand their responsibilities in addressing this issue. It is clear to me that Mohegan Sun intends not only to bring economic gain to our community, they intend to be responsible community leaders. I support their application as we welcome them to Northeastern Pennsylvania. Thank you very much.

I, Thomas J. O'Hara, M.C. verify that the information contained in this written comment is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.