

Casino site



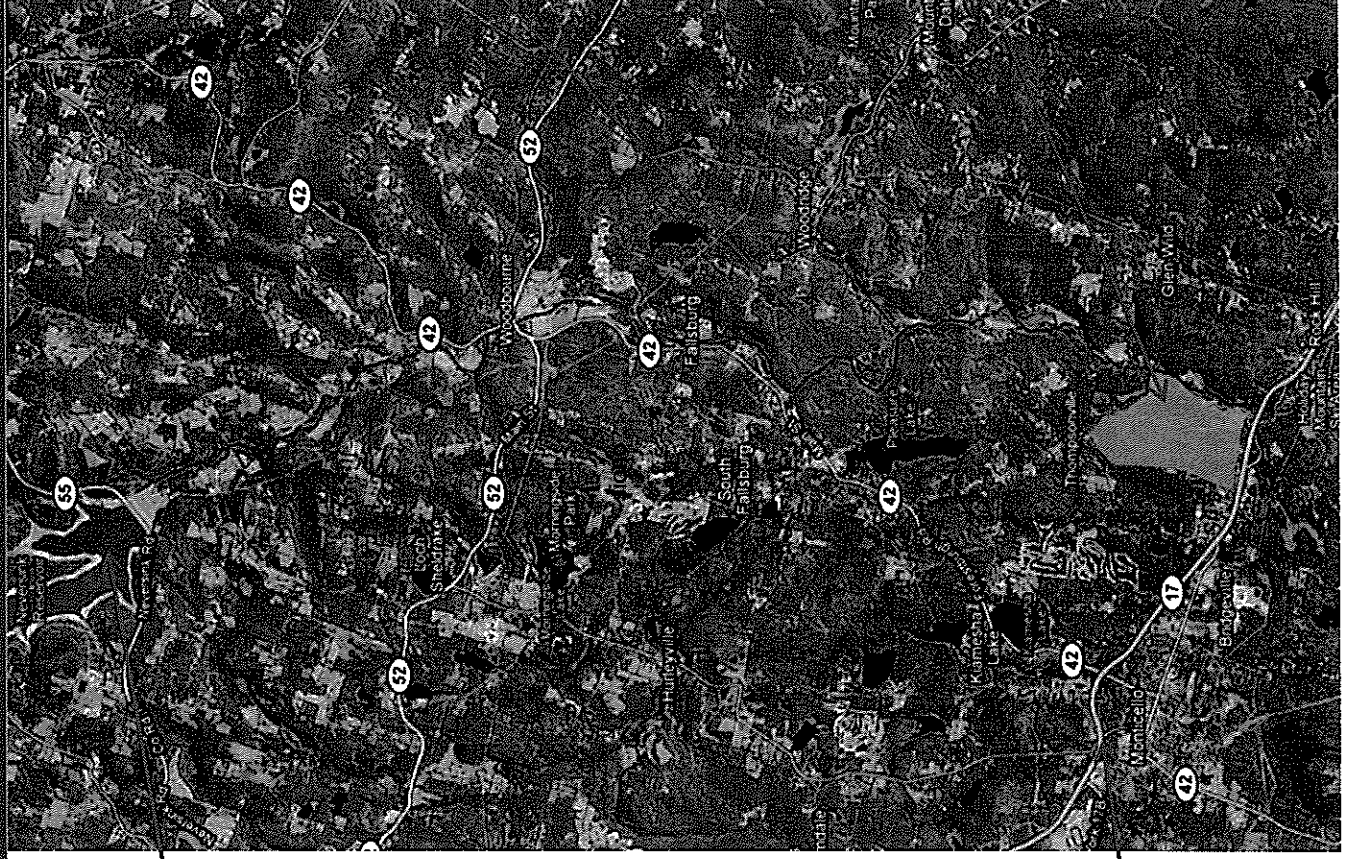
Neversink
Reservoir

Neversink
River

Casino site

Route
17

Casino Site and surrounding area



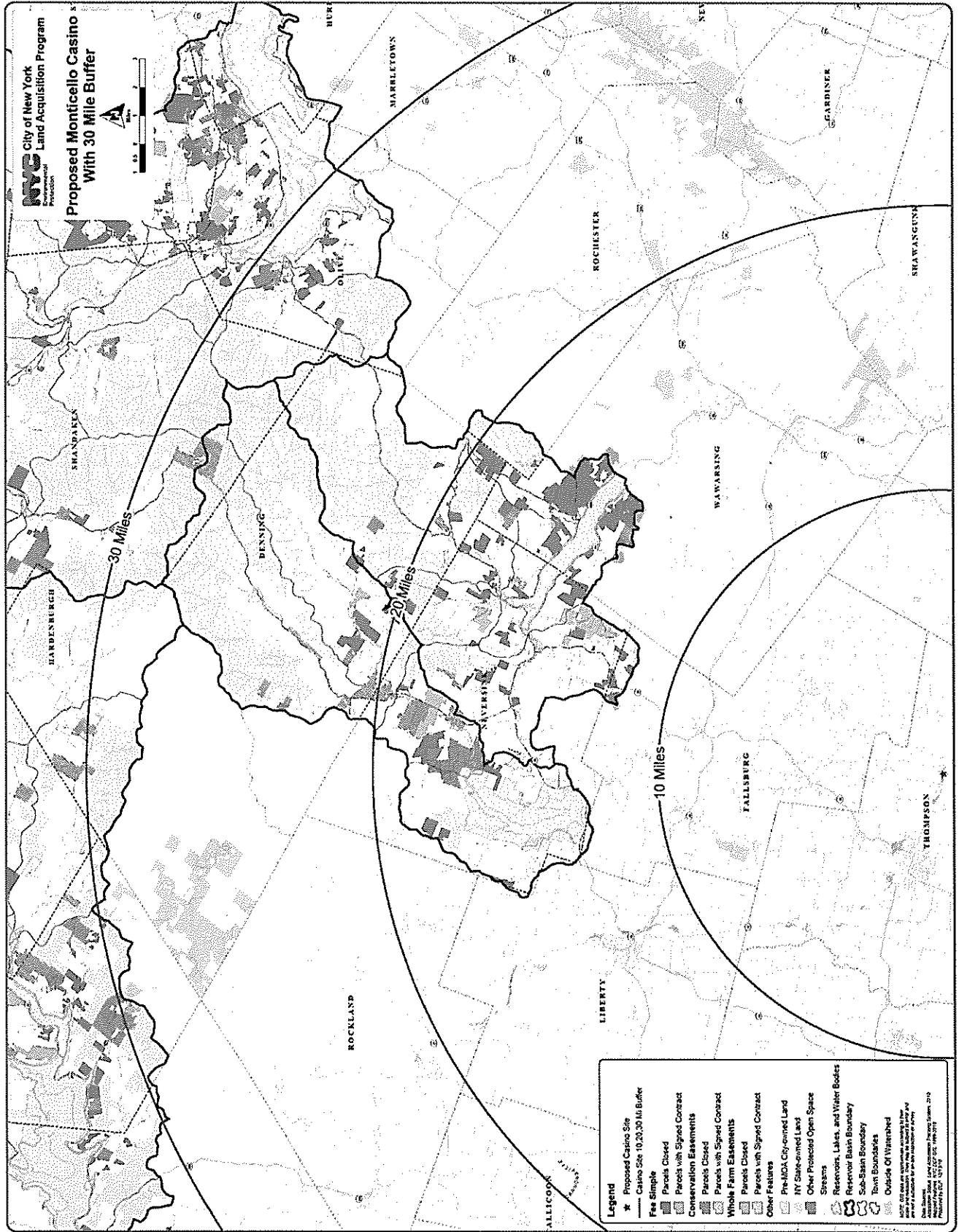
Neversink
Reservoir

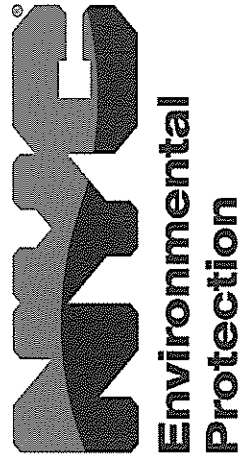
Neversink
River

Casino site

Route
17

Protected lands within 10, 20, 30 miles of Casino site





Statement of Paul V. Rush, P.E.
Deputy Commissioner
New York City Department of Environmental Protection

at a Hearing of the Committee on Environmental Protection
The Council of the City of New York

Thursday, December 16, 2010, 1 p.m.

Good afternoon Chairman Gennaro and Members. I am Paul Rush, Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Water Supply at the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. On behalf of Commissioner Holloway and the Bloomberg Administration, thank you for the opportunity to share with you our thoughts on the casino in Sullivan County that Governor Patterson recently announced in collaboration with the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohican Nation.

Although there are few facts available about the specifics of the proposal, the site consists of a wooded parcel of approximately 300 acres located just north of where the Neversink River flows under Route 17. Some of you who may have travelled to the Catskills in the past may remember a portion of the site as the former Gildick's Junkyard that was easily visible just before Exit 107. The eastern edge of this parcel borders the Neversink River; the western border is Downs Road and the southern border is either Route 17 or an unmarked local road immediately to its north. Thompsonville Road, also known as County Road 161 and Patio Road appear to be the northern boundaries of the site. I have two PowerPoint images that display the site.

Approximately 15 miles upstream of the casino site is the Neversink Dam and Reservoir, one of the four reservoirs of the Delaware System. Water from Neversink, which is of the highest quality of our reservoirs, flows east through a 6-mile tunnel into the Rondout Reservoir, which also collects water from the Pepacton and Cannonsville Reservoirs. The Delaware Aqueduct starts at the east end of Rondout Reservoir and serves to convey Delaware System water to New York City and the other communities in Orange, Putnam, Ulster and Westchester counties that rely on the Delaware system. Apart from withdrawals for the City's use, water from the Neversink Reservoir is released to the Neversink River to meet flow targets set by the Delaware River Master and in accordance with rules set by the Parties to the Amended Supreme Court Decree of 1954, the Delaware River Basin Commission and New York State Conservation Regulations. The current conservation release program is called the Flexible Flow Management Plan.

Because the casino site is outside of the watershed, the City does not anticipate any direct impacts on the quality of the water in either the Neversink Reservoir or the next closest reservoir, the Rondout Reservoir. Based on the limited facts about the casino proposal available to us, it

appears that the only theoretically possible impact of the casino is related to the City's releases to the Delaware River system. Development at the casino site, or withdrawals from the Neversink River for use at the site, could, potentially, have some impact on flow or temperature in the Neversink River. Those impacts could then indirectly affect the City's releases to meet those flow or temperature targets, which could then affect withdrawals from the Reservoir to meet City needs. The State Department of Environmental Conservation closely monitors the water temperature at the USGS Bridgeville stream gage, and in the past a specific flow target was established for the gage. However, based upon the very scant information we currently have about this proposed project, this impact projection is very speculative. Until we have specific information about projected water use, it is premature to reach any conclusion about this potential impact. Nonetheless, DEP will be closely monitoring the casino proposal to evaluate its potential impacts on our system.

With respect to any projection of secondary impacts from the casino proposal, at this time DEP has no facts to indicate that secondary development that could be created by the casino would constitute a threat to our system in general, or to the watersheds of the Neversink and Rondout Reservoirs in particular. Substantial portions of the Neversink and Rondout Reservoirs are already protected from development. The last slide I brought this morning shows protected lands within the Neversink and Rondout watersheds. As of December of this year, the Neversink watershed is already 60% protected from development through fee acquisitions or easements. The Rondout watershed is 49% protected. Of all watershed land within 30 miles of the casino site, approximately 57.5% is protected.

Although there is vacant land in the Neversink and Rondout watersheds that could host new developments stimulated by the casino, that land is farther from the casino site and Route 17 than numerous other vacant parcels. If parcels downstream of the Neversink Reservoir, and closer to the casino, are more desirable to casino patrons than parcels in New York City's watershed, DEP does not expect its own costs for acquisition of vacant Neversink or Rondout land to increase as a result of the casino. Again, as this project proceeds, DEP will closely monitor it to ensure that all impacts related to our water supply system are properly studied.

I know that Chairman Gennaro shares the Bloomberg Administration's interest in preserving the watersheds that make it possible for us to operate the largest unfiltered system in the country. Because the Stockbridge-Munsee casino proposal involves a site that is not in our watershed and does not, at this time, appear likely to create any direct or indirect impacts that would affect the City's watershed, the City does not view the casino proposal as a threat to our water supply system. We will, however, continue to closely monitor this proposed project.

On behalf of Commissioner Holloway and the Bloomberg Administration, thank you again for the chance to present testimony.



TOWN OF THOMPSON

COUNTY OF SULLIVAN

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We have been made aware that the Councilman James Gennaro is conducting a hearing on behalf of the New York City Council -- Environmental Protection Committee regarding the Stockbridge Munsee Casino Project and if it will affect the New York City Watershed. I am the Supervisor for the Town of Thompson and I am happy to be able to testify before your committee. I have also been given the authority to also make these comments on behalf of Jonathan Rouis, the Chairman of the Sullivan County Legislature who could not be here today because he is having his budget hearing.

The Town of Thompson is the site of the proposed Stockbridge project, just off New York State Route 17. This site is not within the New York City Watershed (Watershed), and therefore the project will not have any direct impacts on the Watershed. We have been advised the principal reason for this hearing is a concern that the Casino project would cause sprawl, which in turn could have some effect on the Watershed.

I would like to first commend the City of New York for the decades of focus on protecting the watershed through its cooperative efforts with the State, EPA, and Watershed counties and towns. What has been created is a very strong regulatory system to protect the drinking water supply. This multi-governmental group is the main reason you don't have to worry that the Stockbridge project could pollute the watershed. In addition to this comprehensive regulatory system, each town has local zoning, which assists that town in its control of both residential and commercial growth that may occur in those towns. The New York State Environmental Quality Review Act also provides a method to maintain controlled land use in the Watershed towns.

The Stockbridge project was the subject of a detailed and comprehensive draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This document is over 2,500 pages and was compiled with full public input. The relevant facts relating to the Stockbridge project are set forth in the DEIS:

- the development effects of the casino would be dispersed over a broad geographic area, and more importantly,
- the existing housing stock (including residential projects that are already approved or being subject to environmental review) is adequate to absorb the housing demand generated by the casino's new employees.
- The DEIS also found that most of any development that may occur would be located along the Rt. 17 corridor, and therefore would be well outside the NYC Watershed,
- which is, as noted, well protected by Watershed regulations and local land use and environmental controls.



The project is proposed in the Town of Thompson adjacent to Route 17 off of exit 107 on 330 acres. It is going to be using municipal water and sewer and has developed a state of the art storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) to manage site runoff. Additionally, the Tribe has already done significant work on the property. The site was used as an auto junk yard and mining operation. The Tribe has cleaned up the site, which entailed removing solid waste, thousands of tires and old auto parts that were polluting the adjacent Neversink River; it has also closed the mining operation. All this has been done with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) oversight and signoff.

The DEIS also examined the issues relating to cumulative impacts in the surrounding communities. The DEIS notes that the casino is a destination, and is designed to capture visitors' spending on-site. Visitors coming by bus would spend money off-site in and around the direct area of the casino, which would be the Town of Thompson, the Village of Monticello and the central corridor of Sullivan County in proximity with Route 17. Therefore, there would be minimal development effects to the surrounding towns. Clearly there will be almost zero development pressure in the towns that include the Watershed because of their great distance from the proposed casino site. Finally, the towns and hamlets that comprise the Watershed are too far away from the casino location and too far off the beaten track to feel any but the most peripheral effects, if any. Maybe a few casino employees will rent or buy housing in these communities.

The Town of Thompson and Sullivan County participated in the Tribe's EIS process. During that process these points were made in the record:

"Although the Casino Project is not within the New York City Watershed, it is anticipated that some casino-related economic effects, including housing demand and economic stimulation, may occur in Ulster and Delaware Counties, both of which comprise portions of the Watershed. The Watershed portions of these counties, however, are likely to remain unaffected because it is expected that any growth effects occurring in these counties would be located along the State Route 17 corridor, outside the Watershed, due to the distance between Ulster and Delaware County locations and the location of the casino job centers. It is also noted that the roughly north-south oriented roadway system between the Sullivan County casino area and the Watershed area is comprised of minor local and county roads, some of which are closed during winter season. It is unlikely that casino-related growth would occur along these roadways extending into the Watershed area. Further, any induced development that may occur in the watershed area would be subject not only to local zoning and environmental regulation, but would be subject to the rigorous review standards of the New York City Watershed Rules and Regulations, which are designed to ensure the protection of the Watershed and its resources. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are expected to occur as a result of induced growth, if any, occurring in the New York City Watershed."

Also:

"It is likely, however, that induced growth effects would be dispersed throughout the extensive Sullivan-Orange-Ulster-Delaware-Wayne (PA)-Pike (PA) County area, and not concentrated in any given area, although it is reasonable to assume that new employees and businesses may gravitate toward closer locations. As discussed earlier, however, the existing inventory of available and proposed housing would be adequate to absorb new housing demands spurred by casino and casino-related development. Each residential development project comprising the future inventory that is known to be under consideration would be or has been subject to extensive environmental review by the local authorities, and applicants would have made accommodations for adequate infrastructure and community services, and would have identified and addressed potential environmental effects. These same approval processes would assure that induced growth would be in conformance with local land use plans, and would not result in adverse environmental or other effects."

As the DEIS shows, and we have shown, the Project will not affect the Watershed. We need economic development in Sullivan County. We need to create jobs. Our area has been in economic withdrawal for decades with all the hotels in our area going out of business. Our area was once a proud resource for New York State. Many New York City residents visited our area, stayed in our hotels, dined at our restaurants, and enjoyed our recreational resources. For the last several decades our economy has been significantly challenged. We now have the opportunity to have 4,000 construction jobs and over 8,000 permanent jobs created by the Stockbridge project. This would be an economic shot in the arm of not only Sullivan County but the entire Hudson Valley.

Now is the time to work together. If there was a real possibility of harming the Watershed, the EIS would have identified those areas of concern and addressed them. We would also think that the New York City Council would have provided input during the EIS process if there were real areas of concern.

The Watershed should not be used as a sword by environmentalists to stop much needed economic development and job growth. It should not be used to stop the one project that can restore job security to thousands of local residents. We do not come to New York City and tell you what you should develop. We would ask the same of the New York City Council, given the clear showing that there would be no impact on the Watershed. Keep in mind; it is our Watershed also. We are also concerned about drinking water and environmental impacts. This project should have the highest level of credibility because it has gone through every step asked and vetted all issues.

It is time to focus on what is needed. If we do not allow our economy to grow, the State will become bankrupt. This can not happen. We cannot afford to thwart development because it is speculated that the Watershed will be harmed. I would ask that individuals should not throw out words like "sprawl" to elicit emotional reactions, which would not allow for focusing on the facts. As set forth above, the issues were examined and as a

practical matter, any development will be concentrated in the central part of the County, not in the Towns that contain the Watershed.

In conclusion, we in Sullivan County can not afford to be a subservient colony of New York City which only exports its water. We need to make an economy of our own. Finally, we would like to thank Governor Patterson for his efforts in bringing this project to the point of reality. We would also like to thanks Senator Schumer for his efforts to have this project approved on a Federal level so it can be built and Sullivan County can again begin to be a tourist destination for the residents of New York and out of state residents. Thank you again for the opportunity to put this into the record.



My Name is Allan Scott and I am the acting President of the Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development. Our organization seeks to market Sullivan County and develop new business in the County and support existing businesses. We have hundreds of members who run businesses in the County. Over the last several decades our County has suffered tremendous economic upheaval. Tourism used to be a major industry in our County. We have seen over the last several decades that the economy has suffered with the significant decline in the tourism industry. Many businesses that supported the tourism industry also suffered and the economic downward spiral continues to erode our tax base. We have seen our middle class erode to next to nothing. It is vital for a community to have a strong middle class. That is the backbone of not only a community's economic health but its cultural health. Like many counties in New York we have seen our middle class shrink. There is a very simple solution; we need to create jobs.

The Stockbridge Munsee casino project is a much needed economic engine that can help Sullivan County begin to reestablish and redefine its tourism industry. Tourism is one of the original green industries. Our County possesses a great wealth of natural resources for outside visitors and locals to enjoy. We have always sought to balance and protect our County's resources and the Stockbridge project will not deviate from that great tradition. I would again emphasize to you, one of our most precious resources is our people. We have to give them a good job a decent wage, and not tax them into extinction. The Stockbridge project will create 3000 construction jobs and over 6000 permanent jobs.

I would like to remind this committee that when there were hundreds of hotels in Sullivan County, and millions of people who traveled to our County in the 1950s through the 1980s, there was not any issue raised about the tourist industry damaging the Watershed. Given the fact that all those hotels have now vanished, it is perfectly reasonable to conclude that by redeveloping the tourism industry to its previous level, we would not see any negative effect on the Watershed or the towns that surround that resource.

The Committee should not forget the history of protection of the Watershed that has been undertaken in the last 20 years and that serves to prevent developments that would be injurious to the Watershed. In January 1997, the New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed, ushering in a new era of Watershed protection and partnership with numerous Watershed stakeholders. The MOA signatories include the City, the State, EPA, Watershed counties, towns, and villages and certain environmental and public interest groups. This coalition has allowed for the dual goals of protecting water quality for generations to come and preserving the economic viability of Watershed communities. The MOA established the framework needed to implement a wide range of protection programs identified as necessary by the City, the State and EPA. In November 2002, EPA issued additional rules that build on the

decade of research conducted by the City and the programmatic framework established by the MOA. The programs covered demonstrate the City's continued commitment to long-term Watershed protection. This regulatory framework will allow the Watershed communities to protect this important resource. It should not be used to deny our County of its economic opportunity.

This committee is questioning whether the Stockbridge project would impact the Watershed. The project has undergone a very rigorous environmental review process. It has prepared a draft environmental impact statement and held public hearings. The final EIS is currently being finalized by the Department of Interior. All critical environmental issues were considered. That process indicated that development from the casino would occur in the Town of Thompson and along NYS Route 17. Visitors coming in cars would buy gas and maybe spend the night somewhere (although the casino will eventually have on-site lodging) but this would occur in and around the Project property. So, the project does not anticipate significant off-site commercial development to occur in the Watershed towns.

A related point, which was a compelling argument in the Belleayre Resort hearings, is that a big project like a casino in a place like the Catskills will enable existing businesses to do more business (e.g., existing gas stations will sell more gas, existing diners will extend their hours and sell more food, etc.). As a result, new commercial development will not occur in any scale because the existing businesses will absorb the new demands for goods and services. Also, existing vacancies will fill up before new buildings are built.

The same is true for housing. There is currently a tremendous amount of available housing stock in the Hudson Valley region. Many of the workers for the casino will be individuals who are currently out of work or who move to take the newly created job opportunities. Therefore, there will not be a great demand for the creation of new housing stock. To the extent that new housing will be built, it will be done in the area of the Town of Thompson and the central part of Sullivan County, but not in the more distant towns that make up the Watershed which are too far from the casino. For those towns that may be in a commutable distance, there is not only the town's zoning code, but the Watershed regulations to properly control development in those towns.

In conclusion, we need jobs, we need jobs and we need jobs. The Stockbridge project is an opportunity not only to create thousands of jobs, but to reenergize a once vital industry, tourism, in an economically impoverished county. Sullivan County was once a renowned tourist destination. The Stockbridge project would be a world class facility that would with other world class facilities, like Bethel Woods, help our green tourism industry thrive again. The project has looked at the environmental issues. A full EIS has been drafted. We need to move forward to build our economy. We do not believe our precious natural resources will be harmed. Now is the time to rebuild one of the greenest industries we have, tourism. Lets all work together on this. Thank you for you time.



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

Statement of
The Natural Resources Defense Council
Before the New York City Council Committee on Environmental Protection
Re: Proposed Casino Development in the Catskills
December 16, 2010

Mr. Chairman, my name is Mark A. Izeman and I am a Senior Attorney and Director of the New York Urban Program for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). NRDC has worked for decades – in concert with our environmental partners and the New York City Council – to safeguard the Catskills region. Of course, many of us here today know that the Catskills “watershed” supplies on average 90% of the water supply for 9 million New Yorkers each day. A lesser known fact is that the Catskills region is also a core part of New York City’s “foodshed” – that is, the area in and around the City that supplies us with our much-in-demand “local food.” Indeed, this is why Speaker Christine Quinn notes in her recently-released “Foodworks” plan that we need to launch a new full-blown strategy to strengthen our regional food supply and undertake a “a conscious effort to support our regional farmers.”

We appreciate the opportunity to testify today on how the proposed Stockbridge-Munsee casino – and other proposed Las Vegas-sized casinos for the Catskills – could adversely impact the ecosystem of this sensitive region, including impacts on the city’s watershed and foodshed.

As you know, the proposed casino that is the subject of today’s hearing would be a massive complex roughly 90 miles northwest of New York City on the banks of one of the most famed rivers in America – the Neversink River. The casino would be built on a 333-acre forested, sloping buffer zone along a one-mile stretch of the Neversink River. (We are distributing an aerial photo of this gorgeous site with our testimony.) In the most recent proposal unveiled a few years ago (which may be similar or exactly the same as the new proposal), the complex would have included a 580,000 square foot casino, a 750-room hotel, 22 restaurants, fast-food outlets and bars, a gas station and 9,500 parking spaces. The casino would have drawn roughly six million visitors a year, which is 40 percent more than the number of people who visit the Grand Canyon National park every year.

Before briefly addressing our environmental concerns, I want to emphasize that NRDC strongly supports the rights of the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe and other Indian tribes to self-governance and the pursuit of economic self-determination. Our organization also has a long history of working side-by-side with Indian tribes around the country. And we do not take any position on gambling itself.

Thus, our concerns are not about gambling or casinos. They are simply about the appropriateness of dropping mega-development projects -- casinos or any similarly sized undertakings--

into this fragile Catskill region. And, unfortunately, the proposed casino would pose unacceptable risks to the city's water supply, to the Neversink River itself and to the local food supply. The Neversink River site is about as terrible a location to build a gargantuan casino as one can image.

Let me briefly touch on these three major concerns:

Risks to the Water Supply: First, we are concerned about how the induced growth and traffic triggered by building the Neversink casino – and the potential *cumulative* impact when combined with other proposed casinos in the Catskills – could adversely affect the quality of the City's nearby water supply. While the proposed development site is not directly within the City's watershed boundaries, it is a mere 12 miles below the Neversink Reservoir, one of the most pristine city reservoirs. The building of even just this one casino could lead to a drastic increase in traffic on Route 17 – the region's main artery – and other roadways throughout the region.

This is not just NRDC's speculation. A 2006 report by Sam Schwartz Engineering, one of most respected traffic consultants in the Northeast, reached this conclusion. The report stated, after looking at the potential traffic impacts of building one, three or five casinos in the Catskills, that “[e]ven one Sullivan County casino would exacerbate already congested existing roadway conditions.” And it added that “the Catskill region, with its existing infrastructure, is unsuitable for the development of the proposed casinos.” (We are also providing the Committee with copies of this report today.) In short, building just this single Neversink casino could result in ancillary sprawl and spikes in traffic that would forever alter the character of this region and threaten the nearby water supply.

Damage to the Neversink River: Second, we are concerned about the impacts of the massive development on the Neversink River itself. Just to remind ourselves about the importance of this River, it is the birthplace of American fly fishing. It is the one of the most important freshwater ecosystems in North America. It is a habitat for bald eagle, osprey and 30 globally rare wildlife species. And, among other things, the construction and operation of the casino on this forested buffer land could endanger the trout and other aquatic wildlife that thrive in the river by causing an increase in water temperatures. The proposed construction and filling in of wetlands has led the US Environmental Protection Agency to conclude that the project would have “unavoidable adverse impacts on the aquatic ecosystem” of the river. Finally, because the Neversink is a major tributary to the lower Delaware River, it is also part of the water supply of Philadelphia and millions of other downstream users.

Threats to the Catskills “Foodshed”: Third, we are concerned about how the building of this and other casinos could threaten the hundreds of farms in the Catskills that supply local food to the region. And our local foodshed is already in trouble. An average of 70 acres of New York farmland is lost every day – every day! And according to GrowNYC, in the past 50 years, over a million acres of local farmland have been buried under cement and asphalt. This is why Speaker Quinn in her “Foodworks” plan specifically urges support for “farmers in the upstate watersheds.” It is also why Brooklyn's famous Park Slope Coop recently wrote to the state's top elected officials warning them that another pending threat to the Catskills region – hydrofracking for natural gas – could seriously jeopardize the

quality of some of the local farms that they rely on for the roughly \$2.5 million worth of meat, poultry, fruit and vegetables that they buy each year. While casinos and other large-scale development projects raise some different environmental and public health concerns than fracking, the overall concern is the same – namely, that our local foodshed, like our watershed, is a critical economic and environmental resource that must be fiercely protected.

Lastly, let me point out that before any final decision can be made by federal officials on this proposal, a full environmental analysis under federal law must be completed to assess all of these potential threats. Specifically, under the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the US government must prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for all “major actions significantly affecting the quality” of the environment.

Now, we do not know the full details of this new casino proposal because Governor Paterson has refused – in contravention of federal and state Freedom of Information Act requirements – to release the two documents he signed last month. But since undoubtedly the new Neversink River proposal will be of similar size and scale as the one unveiled several years ago, the first step will be to complete an EIS that, among other things, examines how this casino – and likely multiple casinos – could impact water quality, traffic and sprawl. While some environmental reviews were conducted in past years, a full federal EIS has never been completed for this proposed Catskills casino. This EIS process, which must allow for public review, will provide an opportunity for the City Council and other stakeholders to comment on the proposal.

One step this Committee, and the Council as a whole, could take right now is to remind Governor Paterson of his obligation to complete this legally-required environmental review process before any decisions are made. And while you are at it, remind him that he must also make public the documents he signed on November 22nd.

* * * * *

In summary, let me state again that NRDC has the utmost respect for the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe and respects the rights of this tribe and other tribes to pursue self-governance and economic development. And this controversy is not about casinos or gambling. It is about considering where the right location to build these massive development projects is. We must evaluate how the City can ensure that its upstate watershed, the overall Catskills ecosystem upon which this watershed depends, and our local food supply are not compromised. In its current form and in this ecologically sensitive location, the proposed casino project simply poses too many risks.





Regional Traffic Impacts of Proposed Sullivan County Casinos

Prepared for
Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP
&
Natural Resources Defense Council

Prepared by Sam Schwartz Engineering PLLC

March 2006

Executive Summary

Sam Schwartz PLLC (SSC) was retained by Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) to perform an independent evaluation of the potential traffic impacts to the Catskill region that would be caused by the proposed casino development in Sullivan County. The findings raise concerns for traffic in the region with any number of casinos.

This report reviews the effect of these large-scale developments by looking specifically at the traffic associated with one, three and five casinos. New York State records and legal documents submitted by the casino developers were used for current and future conditions analysis. The focus was on the region's major hubs and on Route 17, the "Main Street" for Orange and Sullivan counties. (In this report, we do not review the effect of casino traffic on other state, county or local roads.)

Even one Sullivan County casino would exacerbate already congested existing roadway conditions. With three or five casinos, the cumulative impact increases to a point where, on Friday and Sunday evenings, traffic would come to a standstill on Route 17 and the Harriman Interchange on a regular basis.

Traffic conditions worsen with one, three or five casinos.

The region is already plagued by severe traffic problems, particularly at the Harriman Interchange, on the Tappan Zee Bridge and along Route 17. With casinos, conditions would worsen, in many cases severely. Key findings include:

- **With even one Catskill casino, Friday (westbound) and Sunday (eastbound) evening traffic would regularly deteriorate into congested conditions.** Eastbound back-ups of 1.5 miles would be common at the Harriman Interchange.
- **Traffic along Route 17 would also increase significantly at key exits, with increases of up to 105% eastbound at Exit 116 and by more than 50% eastbound at Exit 130 with five casinos.** Substantial increases in traffic also would take place with one or three casinos. Figure 1 summarizes the roadways affected by casino traffic and shows traffic increases at key locations.
- **Whether one, three or five casinos, Route 17 roadways would exceed 85% of capacity** (the recommended upper limit for engineering design standards) at locations throughout the region, a condition that increases potential for stop-and-go traffic and, after incidents, severe back-ups.
- **Suggested fixes, such as adding lanes to Route 17, would not adequately solve the overall problems of capacity constraints at key locations such as the I-87/I-287 and Harriman Interchanges.** Furthermore, they would likely lag behind the opening of casinos by several years.

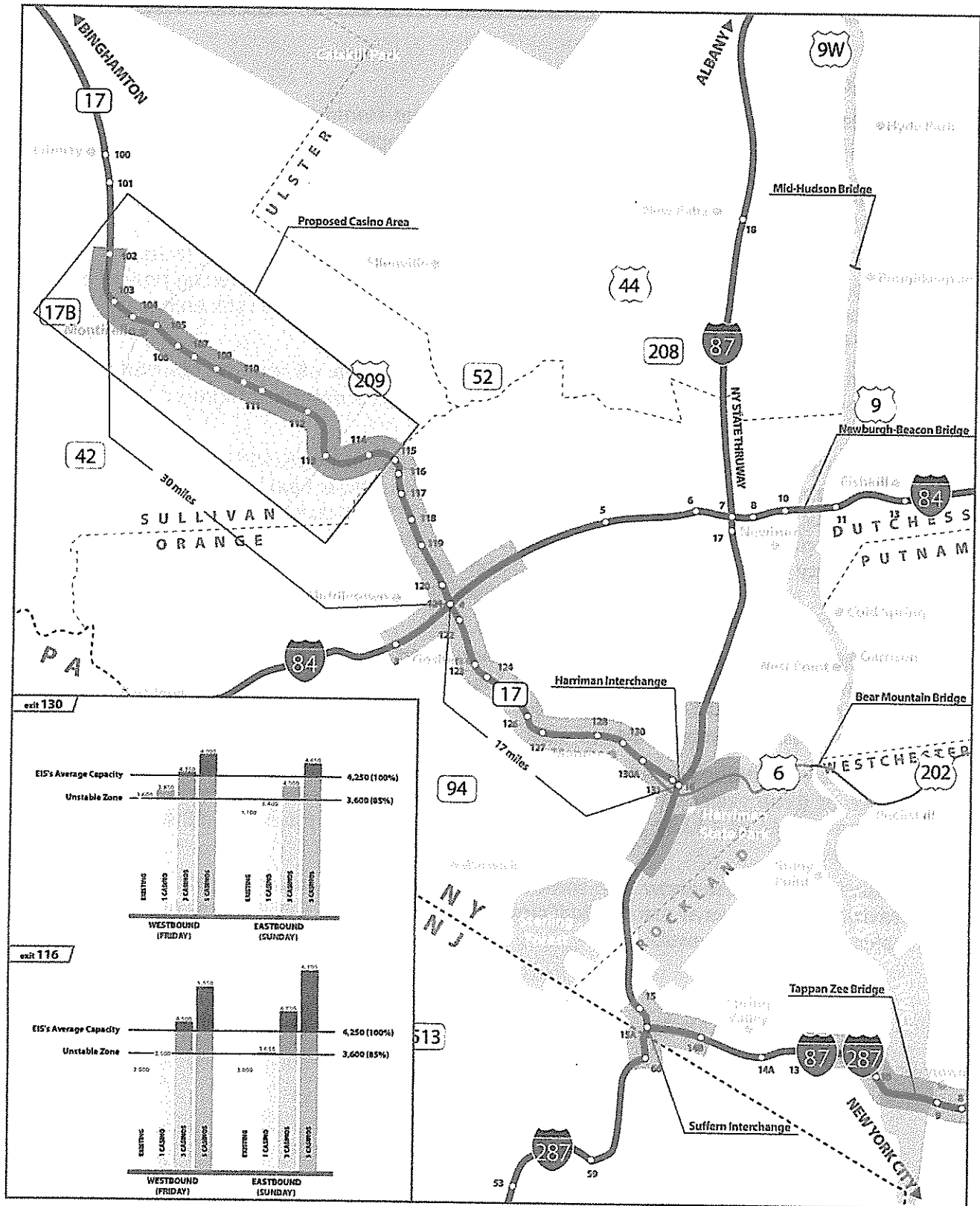


FIGURE 1. PROPOSED CATSKILL CASINOS
TRAFFIC VOLUMES & IMPACTS

Executive Summary

Key Affected Locations

SSC also analyzed the effect of casino traffic on the Harriman Interchange and specific Route 17 exits, again using information supplied in the environmental impact assessments submitted by the casino developers. SSC also reviewed conditions on the Tappan Zee Bridge, where proposed casino traffic might have an adverse impact.

- **On the Tappan Zee Bridge**, casino-bound traffic would make already congested conditions more severe, especially during the Friday evening peak hour. The bridge may also be undergoing significant repairs or replacement in the coming years.
- **At the Harriman Interchange**, eastbound back-ups of four to six and one-half miles may occur regularly on Sunday evenings if three or five casinos are built.
- **On Friday evenings**, Route 17 heading westbound at Exit 116 (Town of Bloomingburg) would exceed capacity with three casinos (106% of capacity.) With five casinos, it would reach 131% of capacity. **On Sunday evenings**, Route 17 heading eastbound at Exit 116 would exceed capacity with three casinos (114%) and with five casinos (143%). With one casino, traffic would reach 86% of capacity, exceeding the recommended upper limit for engineering design.
- **Aside from the doubling of peak-hour traffic at Exit 116 with five casinos**, there would be significant increases with one or three casinos. For example, traffic would increase on Sunday evenings by more than 63% if three casinos were opened and 22% if one casino were opened.
- **Similar conditions would occur at Exit 130 (near Town of Monroe)** with one or three casinos. Traffic heading eastbound on Sunday evenings would increase at Exit 130 by almost 11% with one casino and more than 30% with three.

These impacts alone show that some of the region's most important and most heavily used roadways are not sufficient to accommodate the addition of one casino, much less several.

Current Conditions

Existing Regional Traffic Issues

Before analyzing the impacts generated by any number of casinos, it is important to look at existing traffic issues in the region. As the major access routes are already heavily traveled, there are many issues that must be considered. All of these concerns would worsen with the development of even one casino, let alone five. It is important to note that though this region accommodated large traffic generators many decades ago, long-term background growth and development have drastically changed the character of the region and therefore no longer serve as a proper comparison.

Several areas would be especially vulnerable to the additional traffic generated by the proposed casino developments. Some of these problem areas, and the impact of casino traffic on them, are as follows:

Tappan Zee Bridge

The Tappan Zee Bridge, the major Hudson River crossing north of New York City, is currently congested during peak periods and does not meet current needs, much less future requirements. It is the standard route west from Westchester County and the Bronx and is heavily used already by drivers headed for the Catskills.

An April 2000 report prepared for Governor Pataki's I-287 Task Force outlines the Tappan Zee situation. It concludes that, to maintain long-term service, the bridge "will have to be extensively rehabilitated or replaced" (I-287 Final Report p. 20).

Major findings in the report, prepared by Vollmer Associates, LLP, conclude that:

- Eastbound traffic is worse during the morning peak hour, when there is "limited capacity" that is "causing congestion and long travel times" (I-287 Final Report, p. 16).
- Westbound traffic is worse during the evening peak. The I-287 Final Report states westbound congestion is generally less severe than the eastbound morning peak, "except on Fridays when large numbers of recreational trips are made" (I-287 Final Report p. 18). The Friday evening peak time coincides with the expected peak in casino-bound traffic.
- The Tappan Zee requires extensive structural repairs, at an estimated cost of \$1.1 billion over 13 years. The State of New York is also considering replacing the bridge completely, in part because "rehabilitation would not address the bridge's functional shortcomings, including nonstandard lanes, no shoulders and the inability to provide for fixed route public transit" (I-287 Final Report p. 21).

Current Conditions

Whichever route the state chooses—replacement or rehabilitation—construction can be expected to cause delays along the I-287 corridor. Corridor capacity will decrease as lanes will be closed and detours implemented for construction. As one or more of the casinos could be built within the next several years, casino traffic would compound the delays caused by construction. Even in the unlikely event that the Tappan Zee does not undergo some kind of major structural work, casino traffic will exacerbate already strained westbound traffic on Friday evenings.

Harriman Interchange

Throughout the week, the Harriman Interchange—where Route 17 intersects with the New York State Thruway (I-87)—backs up at all approaches to the interchange during peak periods, though the severity differs based on direction and time.

The Mountain Resort and Casino Regional Traffic Impact Analysis (RTIA) study, prepared by Creighton Manning Engineering, acknowledges this, raising specific concerns regarding eastbound queuing:

Route 17 approaching the [Harriman] toll plaza has the capacity to accommodate the traffic generated by the maximum [three-casino] build-out scenario. However, there are capacity constraints in the existing transportation system that result in queues of vehicles extending west on Route 17 from the toll plaza during the peak hours in the summer...It is anticipated that the queue of vehicles will continue to increase during the peak hours during the summer, regardless of the development of the Catskill casinos. (RTIA, p. 20)

What the RTIA does not account for is the fact that casino traffic would further strain capacity beyond those expected increases.

Further queuing exists on the Thruway northbound due to the limited capacity of the ramp that leads from the Thruway to westbound Route 17. This is a two-lane ramp with an advisory speed limit of 35 miles per hour. Based on information presented in Highway Capacity Manual, 2000 Edition, the capacity of this ramp is 3,800 passenger cars per hour (Chapter 25, Page 4). Currently, the ramp accommodates 3,075 passenger cars per hour. The ramp would near or exceed capacity depending on the number of casinos constructed.

Current Conditions

Route 17 Capacity

An approximate capacity of 2,100 passenger car equivalents (pces) per hour per lane is used as the standard for highways like Route 17. Using this standard, the two lanes per direction provide a capacity of 4,200 pces. Typically, highways like Route 17 are designed to operate at an ideal 85 of capacity. Currently, at Exit 130, Route 17 operates at 86% of capacity during the Friday PM peak period. Our field observations reveal regular queuing during peak periods. Route 17, therefore, has little excess capacity.

Other Developments in the Region

There are several other traffic generators within the region that currently contribute to congestion or will when completed.

These include the Woodbury Commons and two shopping malls along Route 17 (at Route 6 and at the I-84 interchange). A major project, the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, scheduled to open in July 2006, will also increase traffic. This project, with parking for 10,000 vehicles, is located particularly close to the proposed casinos. It should be noted that the number of parked vehicles approaches the capacity of parking for Shea Stadium (approximately 12,000 vehicles.) These developments contribute significant amounts of traffic to the Catskill region, where conditions would be further exacerbated by the addition of casinos.

In summary, casino traffic at the Tappan Zee, the Harriman Interchange and Route 17 would have a significant impact on traffic overall—an impact that is compounded with each new casino. The following sections outline the specific impact that can be expected at locations throughout the region. Analyses are divided into three scenarios: one-casino condition, three-casino condition, and five-casino condition.

With the addition of only one casino, existing strained traffic conditions would worsen. In particular, traffic volumes would exceed 85% of capacity on Route 17 at Exit 116 and 130 and current traffic issues at the Harriman Interchange would be exacerbated. It should be noted that traffic impacts occur despite this being the minimum possible build scenario.

Orange County and New York State Thruway users would bear the brunt of the new traffic. Exit 116 at the Town of Bloomingburg would be particularly hard hit. (In submitting their data, the casino developers looked at a limited number of exits on Route 17. Additional exits, stretches of Route 17 and other locations may see similar delays and crowding conditions, but that information is unavailable.)

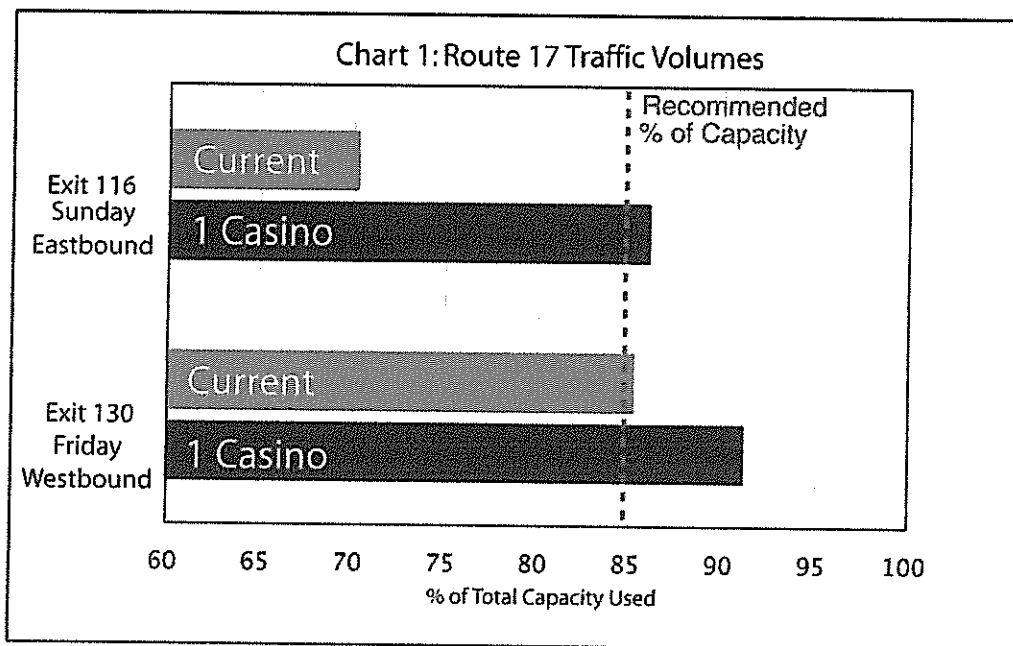
The following section discusses the way in which traffic from one casino would affect traffic throughout the region.

Route 17 at Exit 130 – Near Town of Monroe

Traffic at peak periods at this location already exceeds the recommended 85% of capacity for Route 17. Exceeding the recommended 85% of capacity creates the potential for slowed or stalled traffic and back-ups. With the addition of just the St. Regis-Mohawk Mountain Casino (or any other single casino), conditions would deteriorate further. On Friday evenings, Route 17 would reach 92% of capacity at Exit 130. On Sundays, traffic at the exit would near 85% of capacity. These percentages are shown in Chart 1.

Route 17 at Exit 116 – Town of Bloomingsburg

Traffic would be above the recommended 85% of capacity, exceeding it in particular on Sunday evenings at 87% of capacity. Again, these percentages are shown in Chart 1.

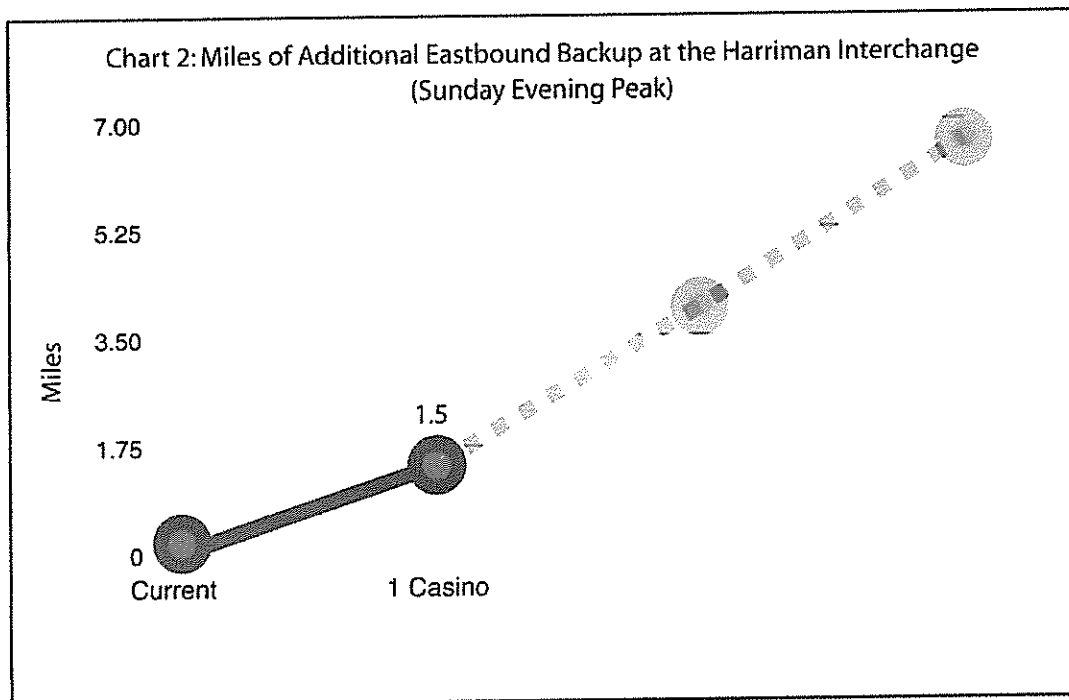


Harriman Interchange

Several routes feed the New York State Thruway's Harriman Interchange, including a direct connection to and from Route 17. The already congested interchange often backs up, especially on weekends, and traffic often slows or stops along the Thruway to the north and south on summer Friday and Sunday evenings. Traffic from one casino would worsen these conditions.

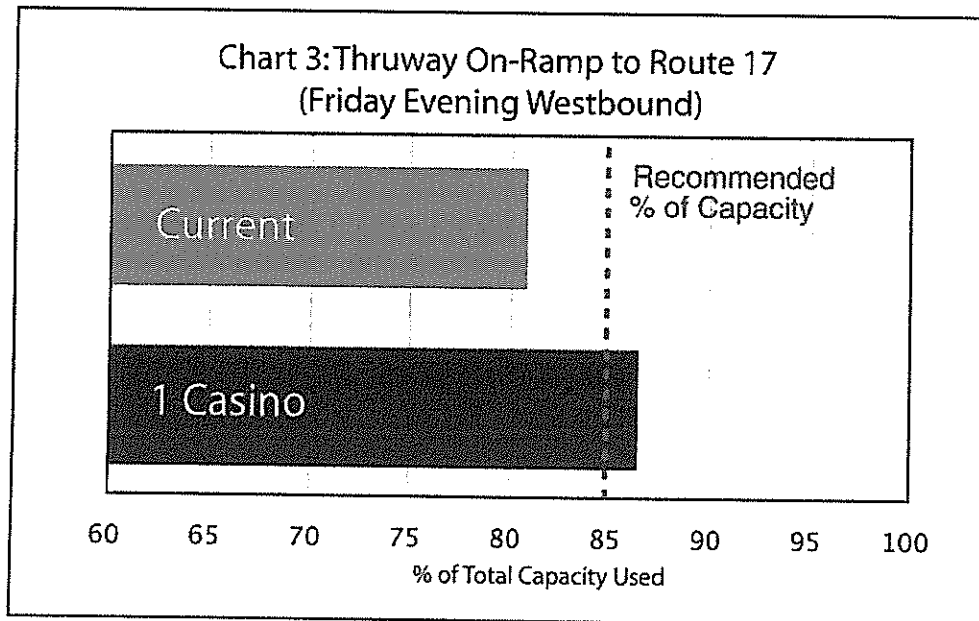
Route 17 to New York State Thruway

Traffic at the Harriman Interchange, the link between the New York State Thruway and Route 17, would back up for an additional 1.5 miles on eastbound Route 17 during peak periods. That is a total of 753 additional vehicles over a three-hour period, added to the existing queue of stopped or barely moving automobiles and trucks. This queuing is shown on Chart 2.



Thruway to Route 17 Ramp

Heading the opposite way, onto Route 17 from the Thruway, this ramp currently accommodates the equivalent of 3,075 passenger cars, according to RTIA's reported PM peak volumes. If one casino were built, this volume would increase by the equivalent of 212 passenger cars, to 3,287, reaching 87% of capacity during the Friday peak hour.



With the addition of three casinos, traffic conditions would be strained significantly, more so than in the one-casino condition. As parts of Route 17 and the Harriman Interchange were nearing or exceeding the recommended percentage of capacity in the single casino condition, the traffic generated by two additional casinos serves only to further deteriorate traffic conditions along these roadways. This scenario is also not the maximum build condition; proposals exist for additional casinos.

With three casinos the data show that traffic would worsen considerably, compared to current projections of traffic without casinos or with one casino. Instead of just exceeding the recommended 85% of capacity, the conditions likely at Exit 116 or Exit 130 with one casino, traffic would regularly exceed 100% of capacity. Exceeding a roadway's capacity results in queuing and backups as the roadway cannot efficiently process the traffic.

At the Harriman Interchange, traffic would also back up, jamming passenger vehicles for as much as four miles, more than double the considerable back-ups if one casino is built.

The following section discusses the way in which traffic from three casinos would affect traffic throughout the region.

Route 17 at Exit 130 – Near Town of Monroe

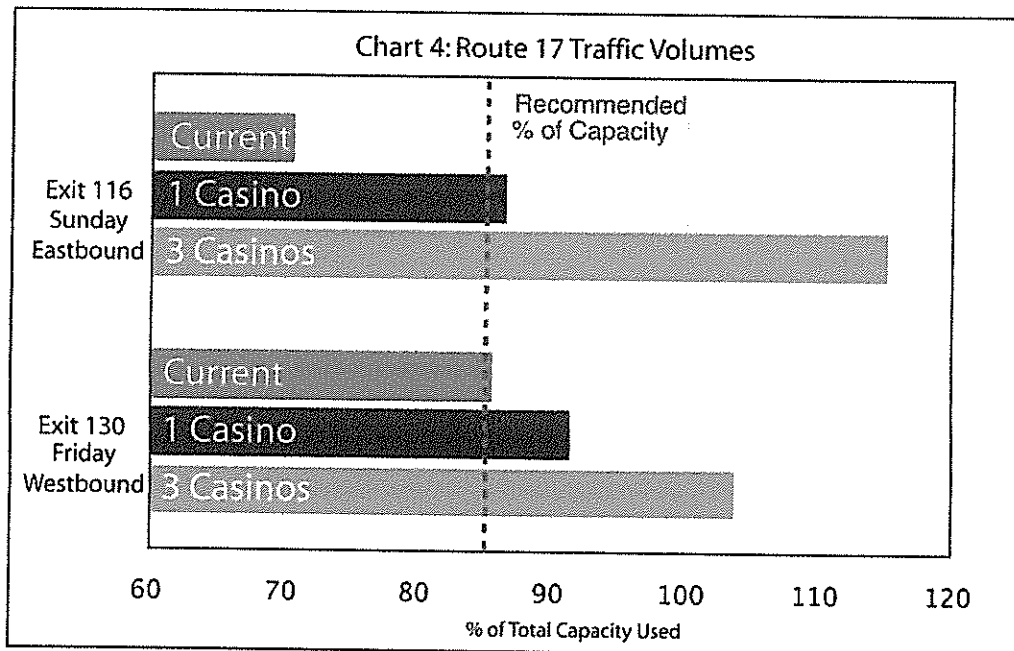
As noted in the description of one-casino conditions, traffic at peak periods at this location already exceeds the recommended capacity of 85% for Route 17. But the scenario degrades significantly at Exit 130 if three casinos are operating, according to the data supplied by the casino developers.

On Friday evenings, traffic would exceed capacity to 104%. Sunday evening's traffic would be almost as bad with traffic at 96% of capacity. For drivers, the combination of over-capacity Friday evenings and near-capacity Sunday evenings would mean that traffic on the two busiest evenings of the week would likely move slowly and, most likely, be at a standstill often for extended periods. Chart 4 shows the increases in percentage.

Route 17 at Exit 116 – Town of Bloomingburg

With three casinos, Route 17 at this exit would have substantial increases in volume, with an increase of a total of 1,865 more vehicles (63%) on Sunday evenings, one of the busiest times.

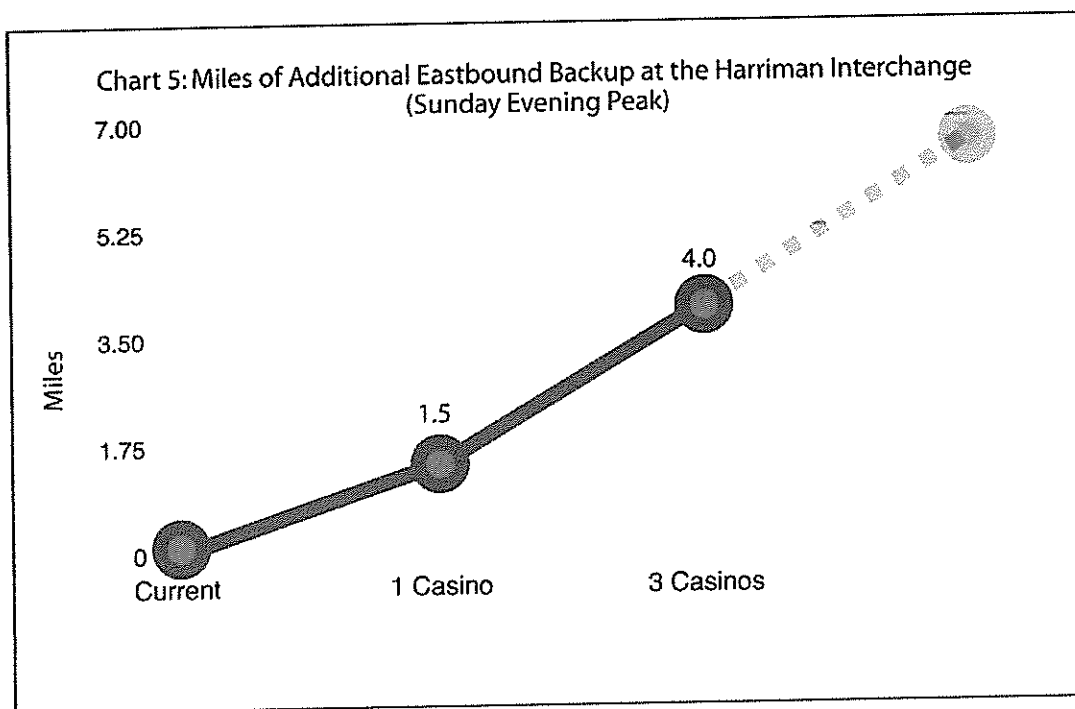
More importantly, the volume on Route 17 would exceed not only the recommended 85% of capacity standard but go above 100% on Fridays and Sundays, as Chart 4 shows.



Harriman Interchange

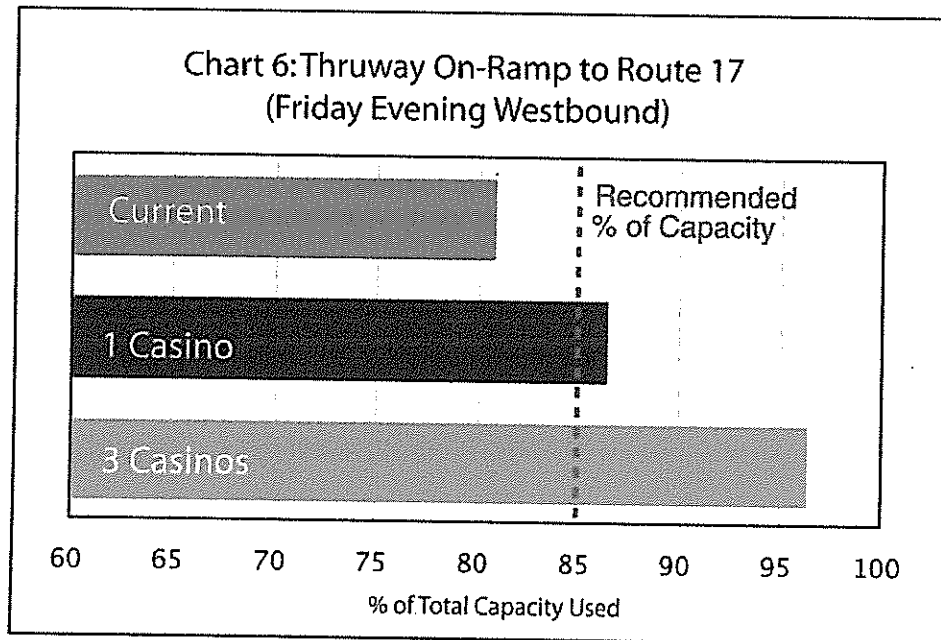
Thousands of vehicles a day go through the Harriman Interchange, whether they are heading to New York City, Albany or the Catskills. Even without any casinos, the interchange backs up. With three casinos, however, the queues would more than double on Route 17 from their one-casino length with bumper-to-bumper cars, trucks and buses.

The analysis of documents submitted by the casino developers and other material shows that, with one casino traffic would back up at key hours of up to 1.5 miles. With three casinos, however, the queues more than double to four miles during peak times, with an additional 2,124 vehicles added to the back of the existing queue. The queuing is shown in Chart 5.



Route 17 to New York State Thruway

Heading from the Thruway via the off-ramp to Route 17 on Fridays, traffic volume would increase to close to 100% of capacity with three casinos. Chart 6 below shows the additional percentage of vehicles generated by the proposed casinos using the Harriman Interchange.



With the addition of five casinos, traffic conditions would be strained significantly, more so than in the one- or three-casino conditions. As parts of Route 17 and the Harriman Interchange were exceeding 100% of capacity in the three-casino condition, the traffic generated by five casinos serves only to further deteriorate traffic conditions along these roadways. This scenario represents the likely full-build condition.

Whether there are one, three or more casinos, the traffic implications are severe. With five casinos, more traffic is generated, as this analysis shows in detail:

- Traffic could double at key locations on Route 17 and far exceed 100% capacity at peak hours.
- 6.7-mile back-ups would be common at the Harriman Interchange.
- Travelers would likely face hours of delays and miles of congestion.

The following section discusses the way in which traffic from five casinos would affect traffic throughout the region.

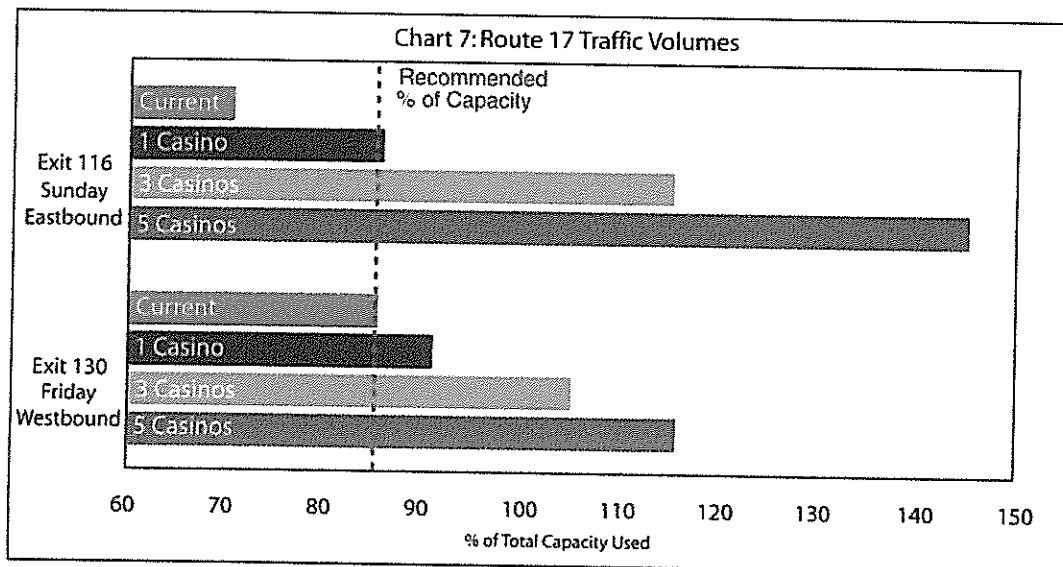
Route 17 at Exit 130 – Near Town of Monroe

With the construction of five casinos in Sullivan County, Route 17 would significantly exceed capacity at Orange County's Exit 130, with an increase of 1,295 vehicles per hour. On Sundays, the analysis shows that eastbound traffic would increase by 1,588 vehicles from current levels. Chart 7 shows these increases in traffic volumes.

Route 17 at Exit 116 – Town of Bloomingsburg

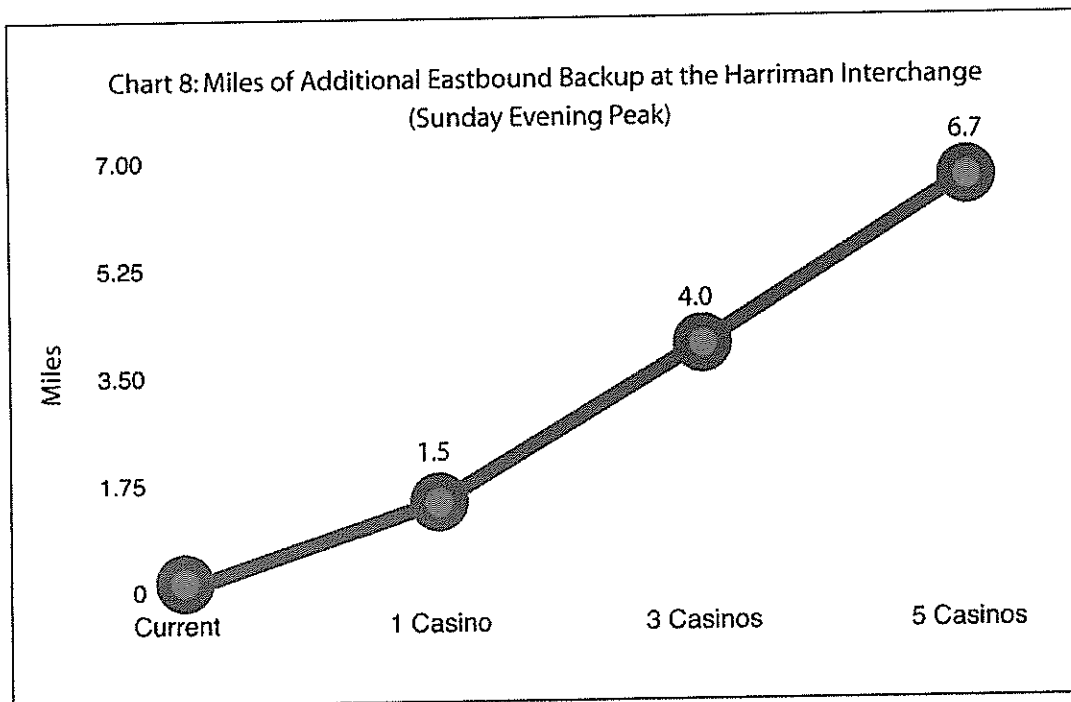
On Sunday evenings, Route 17 near Exit 116 would reach 145% of capacity, with thousands more vehicles hourly during peak periods. Eastbound traffic at Exit 116 would more than double from 2,973 vehicles to 6,087 vehicles. Again, exceeding roadway capacity would cause queuing and backups.

Conditions would be similar on Friday evenings heading west, with nearly 2,600 more vehicles in an hour and 2,000 more than the roadway can handle. Chart 7 shows these increases in traffic volumes.



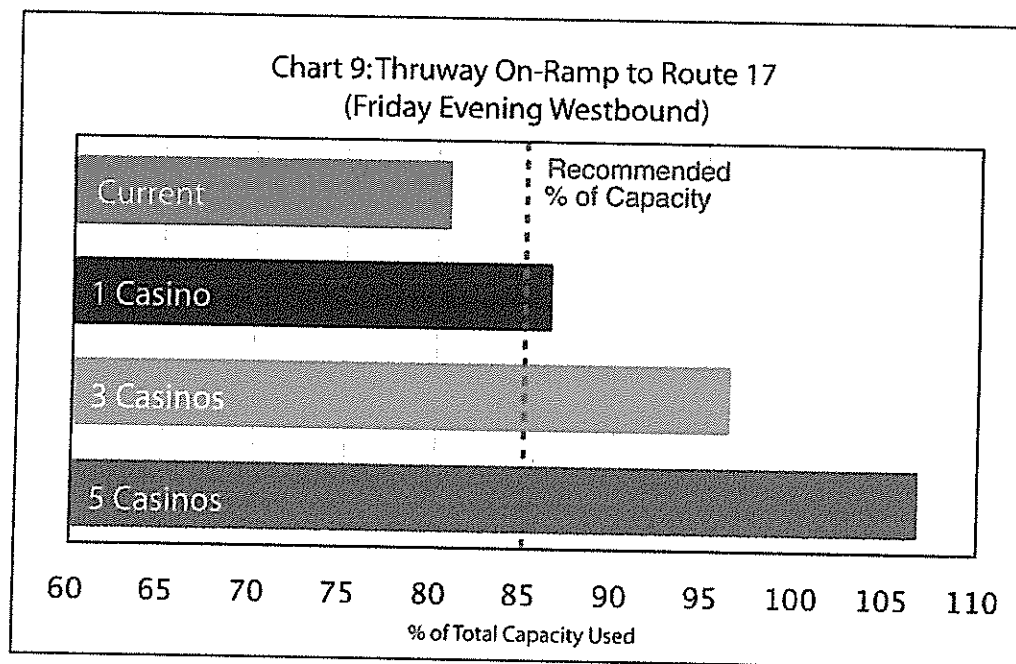
Harriman Interchange

The queuing problem, already severe with one or three casinos, becomes more severe when traffic volumes are projected to a five-casino scenario. For three consecutive hours, an additional 1,180 vehicles per hour would be added to the existing queue. This equates to 3,540 vehicles added to the existing queue and an additional 6.7 miles of bumper-to-bumper cars and buses on the two lanes leading to Route 17. Chart 8 shows this queuing.



Thruway to Route 17 Ramp

With five casinos, the volume on the Thruway off-ramp would increase by 983 vehicles to 4,058 vehicles (reaching 107% of capacity) during the Friday peak hour. Since this five-casino traffic volume is more than the capacity of the ramp, queuing onto the Thruway would result and the ramp would break down with failing levels of service. Chart 9 shows these increases in volume in relation to the roadway's capacity.



Based on review of the current regional conditions and the traffic documentation released pertaining to the casinos, SSC has found that the Catskill region, with its existing infrastructure, is unsuitable for the development of the proposed casinos. With the addition of just one casino, traffic increases significantly on Route 17, approaching capacity Exit 130 in Orange County. Queuing at the Harriman Interchange grows significantly.

These problems are compounded with the addition of more casinos. With the addition of three casinos, most of Route 17 will be above capacity. The Tappan Zee Bridge is already congested, and this congestion will worsen during likely necessary construction in the future: the bridge would have difficulty accepting additional casino traffic.

Casino-generated traffic, when added to background volumes, would lead to delays, backups, and additional miles of queuing, causing unacceptable conditions and negatively affecting the entire highway system in the Catskill region.



L. Todd Dierle
Laborers Local 17
President

Steve Quaranta
Sheet Metal Workers Local 38
Vice President

Jamie Malcolm
Carpenters Local 19
Vice President

Tony Spoziale
I.U.P.A.T. D.C. 9
Vice President

Sam Fratto
IBEW Local 363
Vice President

Rob Ambrosetti
Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 373
Treasurer

Mike Goydos
Ironworkers Local 417
Recording Secretary

TALKING POINTS ON CASINOS

BEFORE the recession, unemployment in Sullivan County was at 12-15 % while most of New York State was at 6%.

Sullivan County has had the highest unemployment rate of any county in New York for the last 20 years. Sullivan County's unemployment in the construction industry is at 30%.

These casinos are not looking to compete with Aqueduct. The Aqueduct's target population is International travelers as well as the population of Long Island, Brooklyn and Queens. The target population for these Casinos in Sullivan County is people living within the areas from Bronx County to Albany County (also known as the Hudson Valley).

These casinos are also looking to compete with casinos presently in Connecticut and Northern Pennsylvania.

Economic studies have been done that show the target population for these casinos is the 1 Million people living within 60-70 miles of Monticello, New York.

Testimony that has previously been given covers the environmental issues. This is NOT a watershed issue.

At one time Sullivan County had dozens of hotels and over 80,000 hotel rooms. This project contemplates one (1) hotel and approximately 1,000 hotel rooms.



Bollemakers Local 5 • Bricklayers Local 5 • Tile, Marble & Terrazzo BAC Local 7 • Roofers Local 8 • Painters DC 9 • Laborers' Local 17 • Carpenters Local 19 • Plumber and Steamfitters Local 21
Operating Engineers Local 30 • Sheetmetal Workers Local 38 • Asbestos, Heat & Frost Local 40 • Sheetmetal Workers Local 83 • Asbestos Workers Local 91 • Operating Engineers Local 106 • Operating
Engineers Local 137 • Sheetmetal Workers Local 137 • Elevator Constructors Local 138 • Asbestos/Lead Workers Local 201 • IBEW Local 363 • Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 373 • Ironworkers Local 417
Teamsters Local 445 • Operative Plasterer and Cement Mason's Local 530 • Road Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 • Millwrights Local 740 • United Cement Mason's Union Local 780 • Operating engineers
Local 825 • Laborers' Local 1000 • Millwrights Local 1163 • Resilient Floor Coverers Local 2287

For over 100 years, Sullivan County was known as the Entertainment Capital of the East Coast. Tourism is the Number 1 industry in Sullivan County and it is impossible to compete with other states for conventions and visitors without legalized gaming as well as hotel and recreation facilities that go along with legalized gaming.

Legislation authorizing these casinos was passed in October 2001. It is now almost ten (10) years in coming to fruition.

The opponents of this hotel have traditionally been Senators from western states that do not want to see Eastern New York have a casino.

The City of New York and its elected officials are not being very neighborly by objecting to economic development in an area that is 100 miles away and one of the most economically depressed areas of New York State.

Upstate New York has lost 30% of its population in the last 20 years. This is due to the fact that there are no jobs for our young people in either the construction or service industries.

No one in Sullivan County objected to the Aqueduct Casino. We want our brothers and sisters in New York to benefit from that economic development. We ask you to show us the same courtesy.

In 1997 Donald Trump and the real estate interests in New York City defeated private casinos in Sullivan County to protect their investments in Atlantic City and no one from New York City objected. The Atlantic City development was one of the final actions that caused Sullivan County's economic depression.

New York City seems to want to dictate to Upstate New York what it can and cannot do but Upstate New York State does not dictate to New York City what it can and cannot do.

New York City Council people did not object to the development of Aqueduct and neither did the City of Yonkers, which is on the border of New York City and Westchester.

THIS IS NOT A CASINO ISSUE.
THIS IS NOT AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE.
THIS IS A JOBS ISSUE.

This particular Tribe has worked a deal with the Town of Thompson and the County of Sullivan guaranteeing a minimum of \$15 Million. New York State is guaranteed a minimum of \$150 Million plus up to 25% of the proceeds from the slot machines.

These casinos will be the biggest property taxpayer in Sullivan County; therefore, giving a great tax benefit to local property owners

There will be no public funds or IDA Reform used in the development of this project.

An Agreement has been reached that, unlike other casinos, sales tax will be collected on gasoline and cigarettes.

This Casino will be abiding by what Mayor Bloomberg wants --- there will be no "no tax cigarettes" and no bootlegging of untaxed cigarettes to New York City.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Quaranto
President/Business Manager, SMWIA Local 38
Vice President, Hudson Valley Building Trades Council

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wes Gillingham

Address: Po box 381 youngsville NY 12791

I represent: Catskill Mountaineer

Address: same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/16/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANTHONY CELLINI

Address: _____

I represent: SUPERVISOR, TOWN OF THOMPSON

Address: SULLIVAN COUNTY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephen Quaranta

Address: _____

I represent: Vice President Hudson Valley Building

Address: TRADES COUNCIL

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALLAN SCOTT

Address: _____

I represent: PRESIDENT, SULLIVAN COUNTY PARTNERSHIP

Address: IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PAUL DONOFRIO

Address: 67 Chestnut St Albany NY

I represent: SHEET METAL WORKERS and

Address: I.B.E.W. (Electricians) same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CIVIC LEADERS

Address: _____

I represent: AMERICAN

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 12/16/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paul Rush

Address: Deputy Commissioner for Water Supply

I represent: DEP

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Izeman NRDC

Address: 40 West 20th St, NYC 10011

I represent: Natural Resources Defense Council

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms