



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## SENATOR BONACIC CONTINUES CALL FOR MORE TRANSPARENCY IN CASINO SITING PROCESS: Urges That Seven Locations be Identified With as Much Specificity as Possible

JOHN J. BONACIC June 6, 2013

| ISSUE: [RACING, GAMING](#)

| COMMITTEE: [RACING, GAMING AND WAGERING](#)

State Senator John Bonacic today thanked Governor Cuomo for submitting casino gaming legislation, but indicated he was very concerned the Governor's proposal would be defeated if adopted by the Legislature and put before the voters in November in its present form.

"Many of the details that the Governor has proposed, including a specific tax rate, minimum application fee, campaign contribution prohibitions, casino vendor regulation, age of those eligible to gamble, and internal control operations make a lot of sense. Not only do I have no objection to them, I can support them," Senator Bonacic said.

Senator Bonacic, however, has substantive differences with the Governor regarding where casinos should be located. The Senator wants more detailed area locations provided in the final legislation "The Governor calls this an upstate economic development act. I do believe he wants jobs upstate. I am concerned, however, that his desired jobs will not materialize unless there is broader transparency and more specificity as to where all seven of the proposed casinos will go," Bonacic said.

The Senator said the bill also appeared to be aimed negatively at two groups the Governor has issues with: Genting which operates the Aqueduct VLT facility; and the Seneca Nation, which is in arbitration with the State over alleged breaches of the Seneca's casino gaming compact with the State.

In 2012, the Governor announced that Genting would build a massive convention center in New York City. Genting and the Governor, however, could ultimately not come to terms on the convention center, and it was not built. The Governor has now excluded the prospect of gaming in Queens County – where Genting operates the highly successful Aqueduct casino, and instead, proposed that a casino could go to Long Island, which draws from the same customer base as Aqueduct.

"I have seen no evidence that Long Islanders – who are a sizable portion of the State's population, want casino gaming on Long Island. Long Islanders and New York City residents are open to gaming in Queens – as the success of the Aqueduct VLT casino has shown. Long Islanders have concerns about traffic and over-development. Under my plan, casino revenue would be directed to revitalize Belmont, which I think Long Islanders would be more supportive of, rather than placing a new casino in an unnamed backyard in a Long Island community," Bonacic said.

Bonacic urged that revenue enhancement for the State and local job creation be the key factors in siting the casinos. Since October 2011, Resorts World's electronic gaming facility in Queens has generated

nearly \$500 million for education. Likewise, destination resorts in the Catskills will generate thousands of jobs near the New York City watershed – which suffers particular development prohibitions because of the reservoirs in the area.

“I can also appreciate the Governor’s desire to have some leverage over the Seneca, given that they are the only Nation who has not resolved their differences with the State. For the referendum to pass though, we need as much transparency as possible in terms of site selection for gaming locations – we don’t need to hold back 4 casinos as leverage, while only locating three now. Voters deserve to know where the casinos will go, and more importantly, where they will not be allowed, in order to vote in an educated way this November,” Bonacic said.