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Delivered by FAX and Mail

Honorable David A. Paterson  
The Capital, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Albany, NY 12210

Dear Governor Paterson,

I am writing to discuss the economic future of New York State, Nassau County, and the communities that host the Belmont Park Race Track.

Residents and community leaders in Elmont, Floral Park, Bellerose Terrace and Bellerose Village have worked diligently on a plan to revitalize Belmont and to turn the underutilized track into an economic engine for the region.

There is strong enthusiasm for this effort in these communities and bi-partisan support among its representatives.

However, many -myself included- have been disappointed by the lack of recent attention this issue has received from the state. The Executive Branch released an economic development study on Belmont in February 2008, but we have heard nothing since.

We now have an opportunity to change that.

As you know, the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs yesterday issued a preliminary finding that will put the Shinnecock Indian Nation on the path toward federal recognition.

If recognition is granted, the Nation will be able to operate a gaming operation on its land -- though it appears they are more interested in an agreement with the state that would enable them to operate an off-reservation casino. Belmont has been mentioned as a potential location for such a development.

I am not yet endorsing placing a Shinnecock facility at Belmont. Such a project must be predicated on a solid plan that includes clear and tangible benefits for its host communities.

However, I believe a discussion on this matter must be had.



I would like to schedule a summit between Nation leaders, community representatives, elected officials, and the State Racing and Wagering Board and the Empire State Development Corp.

The purpose of this meeting would be to gage the Nation's interest in Belmont and to determine if such a facility would be a good fit for the communities and for the state.

I also invite you to attend this summit in person.

Existing gaming compacts with Native American nations generated \$70 million in revenue for the state and local governments during the 2008-2009 fiscal year, according to the state Department of Budget.

If done correctly, development at Belmont will be a boon for this state and a revitalizing force for its host communities and Nassau County.

I thank you for your time. My office will be in touch once a time and date for a summit are set.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig M. Johnson". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Craig M. Johnson  
Senator, 7<sup>th</sup> District