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**Testimony to the Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies**  
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My name is Elaine Bono, today I live in Yarmouth on Cape Cod. I was born and raised in Boston. After 30 years of living in southeastern CT, 27 years in Ledyard and 3 years in East Lyme, my husband and I returned to MA in 2005. Our home in Ledyard was located halfway between the world's two largest casinos.

For 16 years, from 1985 to 2001, I served on the Ledyard Planning Commission, four years as its Chair. I witnessed firsthand how casinos take trade away from local businesses and malls. Casinos also put a strain on the pool of available employees in the area. So many employees had to be brought into the area to support the casino, along with their families, that there was a crunch on the affordable housing market, as well as overcrowding of local schools, putting a strain on local school budgets.

For the town of Ledyard's planning and zoning commissions, regulating such a large enterprise as Foxwoods and dealing with jurisdictional issues with a sovereign nation was a nightmare. The costs in extra employee and town attorney time were borne by the taxpayers. The increase in crime necessitated more police, and the courts became dominated by casino-related crime cases.

Foxwoods was and is constantly expanding. It's open 24/7/365, casinos have no windows or clocks, and the light pollution for the neighbors is constant. Ledyard was a small, quiet rural town of 15,000 in the 1980's. By the 1990's Ledyard had become host to the world's largest casino and had the fifth highest crime rate in CT. By the late 1990's the state proposed to take land by eminent domain in Ledyard and Preston to build a four-lane highway to reduce the trip between casinos from 20 to 10 minutes.

As a tribal reservation, Foxwoods does not pay corporate income tax. Tribal members working there do not pay state income tax. Tribal members living on the Mashantucket reservation are exempt from local property taxes on their homes and their cars. Yet their children attend Ledyard public schools because they live and vote in Ledyard. The town of Ledyard is constantly seeking increased aid from the state to compensate for lost tax revenue, increased town employee costs, and increased costs for schooling tribal children.

While most people who frequent casinos do so responsibly, a significant number become compulsive gamblers. Gambling can trigger addiction, and this addiction has become an epidemic, especially among youth. Gambling attracts crime, victimizes the poor, and sets a poor example for our children. Gambling can cause domestic violence, bankruptcies, and suicides. Gamblers get free alcohol, as long as they are gambling. Casinos attract drugs and prostitution. I witnessed all of these ills firsthand in CT.

In the late 90's the Ledyard tax collector, an upstanding middle-aged woman, embezzled \$300,000 from the town's coffers and lost it all at the slots before she was caught. Embezzlements happened in the Sprague town hall, the Stonington town hall, a local auto dealer, and a local lawyer's office. With a casino nearby, it became too convenient for some people to go daily before or after work (sometimes both) to gamble away their (and sometimes other people's) money.

If Class III gambling is legalized in MA, any recognized Native American tribe in addition to the licensed casino developers will be able to wreak this havoc on the unfortunate host community, possibly in your district. I strongly recommend you all work as hard as you can to avoid that scenario.

Thank you for your time and attention.