

Mayor Rob Ford
And Members of Council
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor and Members of Council:

I am writing to express my concern about the termination of the Slots at Racetrack Program and the negative impact it will have on Woodbine Entertainment Group's operations at Woodbine and Mohawk racetracks and the support they provide to Daily Bread Food Bank.

WEG is a strong community partner focused on building a strong sustainable community, working in collaboration with various stakeholders to ensure the most vulnerable in our community experience quality of life. To achieve their commitment to community, over many years WEG have consistently supported programs for healthcare, youth and the community.

The Rexdale community is economically deprived and any changes that do not focus on economic stability will further marginalize its residents. Specifically, Rexdale continues to be disproportionately impacted due to loss of employment, especially job loss due to the decline in the manufacturing sector. Woodbine presents itself as a beacon of hope in this community. As such, changes that reduce their ability to support programs that address poverty in our community is ill advised.

Woodbine has worked in co-operation with many organizations, including Daily Bread Food Bank. Woodbine has provided financial, food and volunteer support, and has been an instrumental partner with Daily Bread since the recession started in 2008. As social services continue to be cut, and unemployment rates continue to rise, partnered with a lack of affordable housing in our city, people living in poverty must rely on food banks in order to survive. Foodbanks in turn must rely on their corporate partners, such as Woodbine for support. At Daily Bread, we unfortunately know too well what can happen to a community once its main source of employment and support are lost. We cannot afford to open up another food bank in the Rexdale community.

I understand the Executive Committee is considering whether Toronto will host a full casino. I want to express support for Woodbine Racetrack being the identified location for a casino. With approximately 3,000 slot machines already located there, it is an existing major gaming site. Expanding this is a natural evolution. The community recognizes the strong ties and first-class operation that Woodbine Entertainment Group has. With the already demonstrated public support, there should be no need to conduct a referendum.

I urge you to consider Woodbine Racetrack as a facility for a full casino.

Yours truly,

Kristin Thomas
Senior Development Officer
Daily Bread Food Bank