



UNITE HERE Local 75 CLC-FTQ

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Frances Pritchard
Manager, Executive Committee
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November 6, 2012,

To Frances Pritchard,

Yesterday I had the opportunity to address the Executive Committee regarding Item 24.1: Considering a New Casino in Toronto. Several Executive Committee members requested that I submit my comments in writing for further review.

Accordingly, please find attached a copy of my comments from the meeting yesterday.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lis Pimentel

Lis Pimentel
President, UNITE HERE Local 75
Ontario Federation of Labour Building
15 Gervais Drive, 3rd Floor
Toronto, ON M3C 1Y8

Comments to the Executive Committee

RE: Item 24.1: Considering a New Casino in Toronto

November 5, 2012

Lis Pimentel, President, UNITE HERE Local 75

Hello. My name is Lis Pimentel, and I'm the President of UNITE HERE Local 75. Our union represents more than 8,000 hotel, food service, gaming and hospitality workers across the GTA.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. On October 10th I spoke before the Toronto and East York Community Council, where I outlined our union's support for the proposed Toronto casino. As I explained to that committee, UNITE HERE supports the development of an integrated resort casino, as long as a number of key criteria are met. Our union supports the casino proposal if:

- it creates thousands of good, union jobs;
- it is a good financial deal for the City in terms of the City's share of potential revenues;
- it makes significant contributions to local infrastructure including transit, parks, public space, etc.
- it includes a local hiring and training program; and
- it meets a high level of green development standards.

On the subject of conditions, we were pleased to read the City Manager's report, where he emphasizes that City Council has the opportunity – several opportunities, in fact – to outline what the final casino project must look like, and how it will benefit the city, before any particular casino proposals are finalized. From page 4 of the City Manager's report:

“The Provincial requirement for municipal consent provides an opportunity for City Council to shape the development before proposals have been prepared by setting out conditions to reduce or mitigate negative impacts and improve the likelihood of a positive contribution to the surrounding community and the City as a whole.”

We want to see a successful project, one that benefits the local community, the city as a whole, and the thousands of service workers who are still looking for “good jobs” while struggling away at two or three part-time jobs to make ends meet.

We think your job is to have high expectations and a clear vision for how the casino could make a positive impact, and how to mitigate negative impact. Through the initial approval of a casino in principal, all the way through to the planning approvals process, City Council must have a very high level of control over what kind of casino we're going to see. You have a responsibility to the people of this city to ensure the project is set up for success.

Our union represents 100,000 gaming workers across North America, including 55,000 in Las Vegas. We have a great deal of experience in the gaming industry, and have seen the positive impact thousands of good gaming jobs can have on a community. Unionized gaming workers in Las Vegas can work only one job to support themselves, can afford to own a home, enjoy high-quality health care for themselves and their families, can send their kids to university, and have time to just “have a life” outside of work.

Thank you.