

**Public Safety and Security Committee Public Hearing**

**Testimony of Rodney A. Butler, Chairman of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation**

**SB 1090 AN ACT CONCERNING GAMING**

**March 17, 2015**

Wuyeekeekesuk Chairman Dargan, Chairman Larson, members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Rodney Butler and I am the Chairman of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, proud owners of Foxwoods Resort Casino. I am present today with Kevin Brown, Chairman of the Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut to speak about SB 1090.

The State of Connecticut and its citizens and the two federally recognized Tribes and their citizens are confronted with a challenge. Just as we have worked together for the past twenty years for the benefit of all we feel we have an opportunity to confront this challenge together.

As has been clearly demonstrated the expansion in Rhode Island and New York, has cost Connecticut thousands of jobs. Unless addressed the advent of casino gaming in Massachusetts will cost Connecticut thousands more. The revenue of all three entities resulting from gaming in Connecticut has already been substantially reduced and will be radically reduced in the future if we don't act together now.

The drafters of Senate Bill 1090 have come up with a solution, not to expand gaming in the State of Connecticut, but rather to minimize the State's loss of jobs and revenue which will occur if nothing is done.

We would urge the passage of this legislation. If it is enacted the two Tribes can pool their experience and resources to construct one or more gaming facility in locations which will best encourage gamers in Connecticut not to bring their business to Massachusetts or other states but retain it at home where it will provide Connecticut jobs and limit the erosion of amounts paid to the State of Connecticut from the Tribes' existing facilities.

Massachusetts had debated casino gaming for years and its support by the voters, the legislature, and the executive branch was based upon the realization that Massachusetts citizens interested in gaming were in fact spending their money in Connecticut. The authorization of new casinos in Massachusetts reflected the reality that those wishing to game would game. The net effect was simply to retain that revenue in Massachusetts rather than have it leave the State for Connecticut or perhaps Rhode Island.

Likewise, the design of this Bill is simply to encourage Connecticut gamers to spend their money here in Connecticut rather than competing jurisdictions. If it encourages some Massachusetts residents to visit here all the better.

The people of Connecticut have a choice. Should they sit back and permit their jobs and revenue to be exported to other jurisdictions or be proactive and in the most responsible manner possible protect the economy of the State of Connecticut and its residents.

We feel this Bill is a credit to our State Government in attacking a serious economic challenge in the most responsible way possible.

We urge its passage. Kutaputush.