



Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

483 Great Neck Road, South

Mashpee, MA 02649

Phone 508.477.0208 Fax 508.477.1218

Tribe and Taunton Seek Support for the “Good Fight” with Bluhm Gone

Mashpee, MA (September 13, 2019) On Thursday, September 12, 2019, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (Commission), by a vote of 3-1 issued their second public rejection of the project proposed by Massachusetts Gaming and Entertainment (MG&E), and its chairman Neil Bluhm. MG&E, a subsidiary of Bluhm’s Rush Street Gaming, had previously proposed a \$677 million resort casino at the Brockton Fairgrounds, but was soundly rejected by the Commission in 2016 by a vote of 4-1. The Commission’s vote on Thursday effectively doubled down on its prior rejection of Bluhm’s proposal by dismissing MG&E’s demand for an automatic casino license contrary to existing law. The Commission confirmed that it had the authority to reconsider Bluhm’s project, but made it clear there are not “sufficient grounds” to grant any such reconsideration for Bluhm. In response to his second public rejection, Bluhm erupted to proclaim he was walking away from Brockton. “I can’t hang around. I’ve been doing this for more than five years”, spouted Bluhm.

Chairman Cedric Cromwell of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, who was quick to point out the irony in Bluhm’s frustration, states “With two flat out rejections of Neil Bluhm by the Commission the reality is pretty clear that Bluhm has not been honest with the people of Brockton and has no real ties to our Commonwealth. Steve Crosby, the former Chairman of the Commission had it right back in 2016 when he said Bluhm’s proposal for a casino in a school parking lot had “a downside of actually undercutting economic development rather than lifting economic development.”

“From the moment Bluhm arrived in Massachusetts he has done nothing but subject Southeastern Massachusetts to constant delay preventing Region C from benefitting from the economic and job creation that the Tribe’s reservation in Taunton would otherwise already be bringing to the area”, added Chairman Cromwell.

Neil Bluhm has single-handedly forced great hardships upon tribal members by causing layoffs of over 100 Tribal members and the shuttering of key tribal programs with his funding of constant legal challenges. He has also halted literally thousands of good paying construction jobs and careers that were underway in 2017, caused the Commonwealth to lose \$1 million dollars per day in taxable revenue for two years now, and caused the City of Taunton and the surrounding region to lose over \$30 million in critical traffic infrastructure and public safety improvements.

Mayor Thomas C. Hoye of the City of Taunton made his own observations about yesterday’s vote and its implications: “I might not put it in the same terms as Chairman Cromwell, but I do understand and share the Tribe’s concerns. The Tribe is an important part of our community and our history, and they deserve our respect.

I'm glad to see the Commission rightfully reject MG&E's bid for a second time. Bluhm claims to have spent millions of dollars for his failed bid, but I doubt any residents of our region saw one dime of that money. The Tribe, on the other hand, has given over \$2 million dollars to our community under their IGA with Taunton, voluntarily paved our roads, and were extremely generous to the businesses that they had to relocate. Instead of letting outsiders stall real economic development in our region and pitting local towns and cities against one another, we should all be having productive conversations about how the Tribe can help the entire region. Bluhm is ready to head for the hills after five years, but imagine how the Tribe feels?"

"For us this is not about casinos, it's about our Tribe having the federally-reserved ancestral homelands it deserves and which is so unconscionably long overdue", states the Tribe's Vice-Chairwoman Jessie Little Doe Baird.

"Enough with the falsehoods that have characterized Bluhm's PR campaign and attempts by his hired guns to make us "disappear" from America's inconvenient history. Bluhm and the Rhode Island casinos who all keep trying to find ways around the Commission and the Tribe's Compact with the Commonwealth will all come and go. But we have been here, and we will always be here. The best interests of Massachusetts and the Tribe are intertwined. We are fighting the good fight, and we hope Massachusetts will keep fighting with us", Vice-Chairwoman Baird said.

About the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe:

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, also known as the People of the First Light, has inhabited present day Massachusetts for more than 12,000 years. After an arduous process lasting more than three decades, the Mashpee Wampanoag were re-acknowledged as a federally recognized tribe in 2007. In 2015, the federal government declared 150 acres of land in Mashpee and 170 acres of land in Taunton as the Tribe's initial reservation, on which the Tribe can exercise its full tribal sovereignty rights. The Mashpee tribe currently has approximately 2,700 enrolled citizens.

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