

Mayor and Council,  
City of Vancouver  
453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver BC V5Y 1V4

Via E-mail

April 7, 2011

Dear Mayor and Council,

Re: Proposed Relocation and Expansion of Edgewater Casino

We, the undersigned, are members or retired members of the VPD, RCMP and other law enforcement agencies operating in BC, Canada, and internationally. We all have decades of experience in law enforcement, and many of us have particular experience or undercover expertise with organized crime, gangs, and money laundering. Organized crime and gang activity have become deeply entrenched in the Metro Vancouver environment and represent an ongoing threat to public safety.

We urge this Council not to approve the proposed expansion and relocation of the Edgewater Casino. Casinos and racetracks are well known for their vulnerability to the activities of gangs and organized crime--money laundering, loan-sharking, extortion, and prostitution, as well as for the vulnerability to public corruption which they engender.

That organized criminals and gang members frequent BC casinos, and easily use them to launder money, or use them as sites for the operation of loan-sharking and prostitution, is well known. Policing in casinos and racetracks requires a robust commitment to real enforcement of the law--a commitment that is plainly lacking at the present time.

Further, we are very concerned about the impact of increased gambling on our addict population, or those at risk of entering it. We note the 2009 report of the B.C. Medical Association, *Stepping Forward*, which found that the incidence of severe gambling addiction has more than doubled between 2002-2009, and that BC now has nearly as many severe gambling addicts as it does drug addicts. Additionally, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health has recently released a study showing that 29,000 Ontario teens in grades 7-12 now show signs of problem gambling.

It is no coincidence that these youths are also significantly more likely than their peers to engage in gang violence, carry a handgun, and deal drugs other than cannabis. Tragically, they are also 18 times more likely than their peers to have attempted suicide in the past year.

Locating a major casino in a major regional sporting complex sends a poor message to our youth.

Addiction is a blight on society. It has a close and mutually reinforcing relationship with crime. It promotes additional offenses such as property crimes and drug-dealing, as victims seek the money to feed their habits--whatever those may be. There is no way to measure the social cost of this suffering on victims and their families, but the health, policing, criminal justice, social services and corrections systems as well as charitable service agencies all bear the brunt of the increased pressures brought about by this public problem.

Securing new sources of government funds from addicts to pay for their increased demand on government services is not wise public policy.

Without significant changes in the policing protocol, and the adoption of rigorous crime control standards for casinos such as those employed by the Ontario Provincial Police, we are in no position to deal with the increased criminal activity that will necessarily attend the development of a massive casino on the scale proposed here.

As citizens and public servants, we owe a duty of care to society's weakest and most vulnerable, to our youth and seniors, and to the public at large. As police officers, we have seen the ravages of addiction and of gang and organized crime first-hand. The connection is closer than most members of the public may imagine.

We urge Vancouver City Council to vote against the expansion and relocation of the Edgewater Casino.

Yours truly,

Assistant Commissioner Earl Moulton - RCMP Commanding Officer Saskatchewan (Ret'd) Chair of Vision Quest Recovery Society (Addiction recovery services, BC)  
Deputy Chief Constable Peter Ditchfield, Organized Crime Agency of BC (Ret'd)  
Detective Ian Pope, Organized Crime Agency of B.C., formerly VPD, (Ret'd)  
Sergeant Bob Cooper, VPD Asian Organized Crime Section, (Ret'd)  
Sergeant Ivan Chu, New Westminster Police Service (Ret'd)  
Superintendent Glenn Woods, Officer in Charge of Behavioural Sciences, RCMP (Ret'd)  
Staff Sergeant Otto Bertagnolli, RCMP Drug Section (Ret'd)  
Staff Sergeant Scot Filer, RCMP Major Crime Section (Ret'd)  
Staff Sergeant Peter Montague, RCMP Commercial Crime Section (Ret'd)  
Corporal Howard Parks, RCMP Money Laundering Expert (Ret'd)  
Corporal Chris Mathers, RCMP Money Laundering Expert (Ret'd)  
Sergeant Pat Powell, RCMP Threat Assessment Expert (Ret'd)  
Inspector Keith Davidson, RCMP Major Crime Section (Ret'd)  
Staff Sergeant Bob Hartl, RCMP Security Engineering Expert (Ret'd)  
Dr Teal Maedel, RCMP Operational Psychologist (Major Crime Section)  
Staff Sergeant Robert Stenhouse, RCMP Drug Section (Ret'd)  
Staff Sergeant Sid Slater, RCMP Major Crime Section (Ret'd)  
Staff Sergeant Tibi Roman, RCMP Border Integrity (serving)