



CITIZEN OUTREACH

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June 29, 2016

Mr. Steve Hill
Southern Nevada Tourism Infrastructure Committee
Governor's Office of Economic Development
555 E. Washington Street, Ste. 5400
Las Vegas, NV 89101

Dear Chairman Hill,

It has come to my attention that Clark County Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani was unable to attend the last SNTIC meeting because she was preoccupied at a separate meeting in which she led the effort to prevent the addition of three new potentially life-saving PRIVATE trauma centers in a "crony government" effort to protect the taxpayer-subsidized UMC trauma center from private sector competition.

As such, Commissioner Giunchigliani instead sent you a letter sharing her considerable opinions on the proposed Las Vegas Dome stadium. Please enter this letter of response under public comment.

Ms. Giunchigliani writes that she, "along with many constituents, have been watching the discussions about the remodeling and expansion of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) and the room tax needed to assist with that proposal."

She goes on to state her opposition to the as yet unfinalized proposal to fund the Las Vegas Dome project with a portion of the room tax - which should more accurately be called the "tourist" tax - declaring emphatically that, in her opinion "that discussion should not even be considered."

"Room taxes are public," the commissioner wrote, "and if someone wishes to build a stadium they should use their private dollars to build it – no public taxes should be utilized in any format."

It is unclear if the commissioner even realizes the blatantly contradictory nature of her ill-conceived position.

First, as one of her constituents who lives in the same commission district as the proposed convention center expansion, I stand not only in opposition to the convention center expansion but especially the use of tourist tax dollars allegedly “needed” to fund it.

Unlike the proposed Las Vegas Dome - which would have as competition only the outdated and dilapidated Sam Boyd Silver Bowl stadium – the subsidized convention center openly competes, at below market rates, against numerous private sector convention facilities on the Strip and in the Las Vegas valley.

To borrow the commissioner’s own words, if someone wishes to expand the LVCVA convention center, they should use their private dollars to build it – no public taxes should be utilized in any format.

Indeed, if tourist tax dollars shouldn’t be used to build the Las Vegas Dome, then they shouldn’t be used to expand the convention center either. It’s as simple as that.

With that said, unless Commissioner Giunchigliani is prepared to join me in calling for the complete and total elimination of the use of tourist tax dollars to subsidize the LVCVA convention center, then it absolutely is appropriate to have a discussion of the best use of existing tourist tax dollars as it relates to the stadium.

If you make the case that it’s appropriate to use tourist tax dollars to subsidize a convention center that competes with numerous private sector convention facilities, then surely a new, state-of-the-art stadium that will be used for not only an NFL football franchise, but by UNLV and hundreds of other entertainment events the facility could and would host, is similarly appropriate.

Las Vegas is the entertainment capital of the world. How can any fair-minded individual conclude that using tourist tax dollars to subsidize a convention center is okay but not a one-of-its-kind stadium that will greatly enhance and expand the entertainment opportunities that’ll benefit all of Clark County and Nevada?

A new stadium would diversify entertainment on the Strip and bring in new tourism that isn’t possible otherwise. An expanded convention center will only provide additional, unfair competition with private sector convention facilities.

If the choice is either/or, this should be a no-brainer. But for those who insist on having their cake and eating it, too, there are other ways to fund the convention center expansion without an increase in the tourist tax.

LVCVA, as Commissioner Steve Sisolak has noted in recent SNTIC hearings, could increase the rental rates it charges to current market levels.

Or the expansion project could be scaled back or delayed.

Or tourist taxes currently being wasted on duplicative marketing, advertising and promotion that rightly should be done by the individual hotels, casinos and resorts could be eliminated or scaled back, in addition to such advertising contracts being put out to more competitive bidding.

I recognize that many involved in this matter want to have it both ways. But as the Rolling Stones so famously put it, you can't always get what you want. But we can certainly get what we need.

Abraham Lincoln famously wrote that the legitimate object of government is "to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they cannot, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves."

This community clearly needs a new stadium close to the Strip to expand our economy further into major sports entertainment.

It does not need a convention center expansion.

I urge you and members of the SNTIC to make the tough choice to use existing tourist tax revenue to help fund construction of the Las Vegas Dome rather than expand the convention center.

Respectfully yours,



Chuck Muth
President

cc: Steve Sisolak

Disclaimer: Citizen Outreach has received financial support in the past from the Las Vegas Sands, one of the proponents of the stadium project. This disclosure is made, as required by the organization's bylaws, with the permission of the donor.