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17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Lisa Plante.

18 MS. PLANTE: My name is Lisa Plante. I'm a

19 lifelong resident of Fall River, Massachusetts. I'm

20 also president of the organization, Stop the Casino.

21 Stop the Casino is a recognized group established in

22 the spring of 1994. It is a diverse group of citizens

23 that ranges from progressive Democrats to conservative

24 Republicans.

1 We are organizing the greater Fall River
2 area to oppose the expansion of gambling through
3 petition, education and legislation. Our present focus
4 is to educate the community about the social and
5 economic effects of gambling. The city has been under
6 an advertising blitz that is pro-casino. Casino
7 proponents are promising our residents a new economic
8 rebirth, we differ with their claims.

9 I became concerned with the gambling issue
10 when I began meeting people who thought the proposal of
11 a high stakes bingo hall would not be good for our
12 city. As I began my own research into gambling I was
13 shocked at how our local officials were pushing
14 gambling as economic development. We are outraged in
15 finding that casinos target economically depressed
16 areas like Fall River.

17 We have found that the industry has an all
18 consuming appetite and that the citizens of the city
19 will be the main losers and their losses will not go
20 back into the city, but into the coffers of rich casino
21 owners. The gambling interest has influenced our city
22 fathers as if what is most important here is what is
23 good for the tribe and casino owners and not what is
24 good for the city of Fall River and its citizens.

1 This idea of gambling as economic
2 development to us in our community is insane. Another
3 problem we see is one of social concern. The gambling
4 industry has whitewashed itself as being a family
5 oriented entertainment center, adding amusement parks,
6 restaurants and day care centers, so while mom and dad
7 are eating and drinking for a very low cost or no cost
8 at all, they are gambling their paychecks away. We do
9 not accept the casino propaganda machine's picture of
10 gambling as being entertainment for the entire family,
11 this is not clean American fun and children do not
12 belong in casinos at all.

13 Another thing we've learned about the
14 gambling industry is where there is big money there is
15 also corruption. We are aware the gambling industry is
16 handing out millions of dollars to federal, state and
17 local campaigns and the money is distributed to both
18 Democrats and Republicans. We know money equals
19 influence and what angers us is that elected officials
20 will undoubtedly vote in the interests of their
21 contributors and not in the interests of their
22 constituents. This practice is hurting our country.

23 We as concerned citizens go on record as
24 opponents of the proposed Wampanoag Carnival Bingo Hall

1 Casino project located in Fall River. We are also very
2 much opposed to the expansion of any legalized gambling
3 under the disguise of economic development. This is an
4 issue that transcends partisan politics and is of equal
5 concern to all people, no matter what religious or
6 moral values they hold. It is an economic issue that
7 will ultimately effect the quality of life in our city
8 and surrounding communities for decades to come.

9 We appreciate this opportunity to voice our
10 concerns. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you