

Hundreds speak out on N.Y. casino plans

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 23 September 2014 03:53 -

David Klepper, Associated Press 9:33 p.m. EDT September 22, 2014



Marie Cookson, of East Greenbush, opposes a casino in her town during a public meeting on casinos on Monday. (Photo: Associated Press)

Story Highlights

- A state board reviewing 16 casino applications is expected to recommend up to four winners this fall
- Most of the opposition so far has focused on the Capital View Casino proposed for East Greenbush in Rensselaer County
- Capital View's backers include Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan, who said the project would create jobs for residents throughout the region

COLONIE – Supporters and critics of proposals for an Albany-area casino weighed in Monday on the first of three days of public hearings on casinos planned for upstate New York.

A state board reviewing 16 casino applications is expected to recommend up to four winners this fall, and supporters and opponents alike said this week's public hearings may be their best chance to make their case.

Monday's hearing at an Albany-area hotel focused on four bids for a Capital Region casino. Hearings on Tuesday in Poughkeepsie and Wednesday in Ithaca will focus on proposals in the Catskills and mid-Hudson Valley, and the Southern Tier-Finger Lakes region, respectively.

Busloads of supporters of a proposal at Howe Caverns showed up Monday wearing yellow shirts. Backers of the Rivers Casino & Resort in Schenectady wore teal shirts and brought a

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cake featuring the casino's rendering in frosting.

"It's an investment Schenectady needs," Schenectady Chamber of Commerce President Charles Steiner told the board, "that has the potential to shift our entire regional economy in a positive way."

State Sen. James Seward, a Republican, noted that the Howe Caverns proposal would be built alongside an existing tourist attraction in Schoharie County, one of the Capital Region's most economically depressed counties.



Supporters of the proposed Rivers Casino and Resort at Mohawk Harbor in Schenectady cut a cake during a news conference as a public meeting on casinos was being held in a nearby conference room, on Monday in Albany. Supporters and critics of proposals for an Albany area

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casino are weighing in as three days of public hearings on casinos planned for upstate New York get underway. (Photo: Associated Press)

"Strong local government and local support — it's all there in a package," he said. "It's ready to be constructed. ... We're ready to rebuild our region's economy."

Most of the opposition so far has focused on the Capital View Casino proposed for East Greenbush in Rensselaer County. Dozens of residents held protest signs and told the board that a casino would lead to increased traffic, crime and other negative impacts.

"We are loud and we are forceful because we are determined," resident Elizabeth Wade said.

Capital View's backers include Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan, who said the project would create jobs for residents throughout the region while also bringing new customers to local businesses.

The Hard Rock casino proposed for Rensselaer also attracted supporters who touted the project's well-known brand and its location at the nexus of the Hudson River and the rail lines and interstates around Albany. "We're in a crossroads, and we can utilize that," David Scott Dwyer said.

Tuesday's hearing in Poughkeepsie will focus on the region that's attracted the most interest from casino developers. Nine developers have proposed casinos in the Catskills and mid-Hudson Valley, with six in Orange County, two in Sullivan and one in Ulster. On Wednesday, supporters and opponents will weigh in on the three proposals in the Southern Tier-Finger Lakes region: the existing Tioga Downs racino, Traditions Resort & Casino in Broome County, and Lago Resort & Casino in Seneca County.

Public meetings

Three hearings will be held starting Monday to allow the public to weigh in on the casino

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proposals. They will be held from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Tuesday in Poughkeepsie:

The Grandview

176 Rinaldi Blvd.

Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

Wednesday in Ithaca:

Hotel Ithaca

222 S. Cayuga St.

Ithaca, New York 14850

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