

Supporting The Continuation Of Off-Track Betting (OTB) Revenues For Participating Counties And Opposing Further “Racinos” Unless Operated By Catskill Off-Track Betting (OTB) Corporation

The Ways and Means Committee (Chairman Cummings and Legislators Busick, Noonan, Stock, Tipp, Dart, Feldmann, Lomita and R.A. Parete) offers the following:

WHEREAS, since 1971, Statewide Off-Track Betting (OTB) Corporations have paid more than \$2.8 billion dollars to Counties of New York State and the City of New York and have paid over \$900 million dollars to the State of New York, and

WHEREAS, since 1971, Statewide OTB Corporations have paid over \$3.3 billion dollars to the Racing Industry, and

WHEREAS, over 3500 New York State residents are currently employed at OTB Corporations across New York State, and

WHEREAS, the Catskill OTB has paid over \$10 million to participating counties in the year 2003, and nearly \$8 million in 2004, including \$640,000.00 for Ulster County, and

WHEREAS, through 2004, Ulster County has received over \$16 million dollars of much needed revenues through participation in Catskill OTB, and

WHEREAS, in recent years, Statewide OTB revenues have been seriously threatened by legislative enactments, apathy and private forces attempting to divert revenues known by member counties to their own individual cause or benefit, and

WHEREAS, it is a recommendation by the President and the Board of Directors of the Catskill OTB Corporation that member counties aggressively oppose any further incursions on County revenues from OTB, and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the State enacted new laws to allow video lottery terminals at certain New York racetracks for the support of education and to bolster the failing harness industry, and

WHEREAS, of the six New York harness tracks operating in 2001, one harness track has ceased operations for failure to obtain a harness racing license and a subsequent bankruptcy; four harness tracks have opened “racinos” to present the video lottery games at their facilities and one has closed for renovation to create such a “racino”, and

WHEREAS, an additional new harness track will increase competition among already faltering harness tracks for best horses and race dates. Such new track will dilute monies paid to existing harness tracks from OTB, and

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WHEREAS, such track/"racino" will provide no additional revenues for counties; will siphon off wagering from longstanding revenue producing OTB's; will offer their own OTB facilities without surcharge revenues for the counties and will divert much needed revenues from other participating OTB counties from regional residents.

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature does hereby urge that the Legislature of the State of New York to refuse and reject any amendments of New York State Law which would further erode OTB revenues for counties, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature opposes State approval for a prospective track/"racino" seeking to operate within a participating county of the Catskill Region unless such track/"racino" is operated by the Catskill OTB Corporation and unless revenue are paid to participating counties as were paid by OTB for the year 2003, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor George E. Pataki, Comptroller Alan Hevesi, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, Senate Minority Leader David A. Paterson, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Assembly Majority Leader Paul A. Tokasz, Assembly Minority Leader Charles Nesbitt, New York State Senators John J. Bonacic and William J. Larkin, Jr., New York State Assemblymen Kevin Cahill, Clifford Crouch, Daniel Hooker and Thomas Kirwan, the New York State Association of Counties, and the President of Catskill Off-Track Betting Corporation, and moves its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
UNKNOWN

1130

REFERRED BACK TO COMMITTEE