

Why you should care

This region needs to ask itself, what is the cost of a missed opportunity? Because that's what placing a casino-resort on this land would be. It would take up space in an area that might otherwise attract any number of businesses or industries that could have a beneficial impact on our area—businesses that would actually create products and services, businesses that could draw revenues from outside our region, businesses that would not by their very nature increase crime, increase addiction, increase bankruptcies.

Putting a casino at the Interstate 5 La Center junction would be a missed opportunity for better possibilities. The traffic, noise, and type of activity generated by a casino would clearly discourage other industrial endeavors with conflicting needs and competing transportation patterns.

Once the 152 acres at the La Center interchange are placed in trust, they are not coming out. After a casino-resort is built on this land, it is not going to be unbuilt. There is no trial period for this project during which we can see if a Las Vegas-style casino is a fit for our area, whether it will bolster our economy or bust it. And past experience shows that a casino rarely has an invigorating effect over the long term.

Economist Earl Grinols has found that even with conservative estimates, gambling fails a cost-benefit test with a \$3 to \$1 ratio, costs to benefits. He writes that the introduction of casino-style gambling to a county of 100,000 adults would "create additional social costs of \$14.3 million annually and social benefits of \$4.6 million."¹

Moreover, other research shows that:

- The bankruptcy filing rate in U.S. counties with casinos is 18 percent higher than in counties without casinos.
- Violent crime increases up to 13 percent in counties that have had casinos for at least four years.²
- Nationwide, 42 percent of counties with commercial casinos have experienced job losses.³

If this land is taken into trust and is developed as a casino-resort, we will only be left to wonder what might have been.

¹ Earl Grinols, "Gambling Economics: Summary Facts," Texas Public Policy Foundation, 17 November 2004, (www.texaspolicy.com/pdf/2005-03-vlt-grinols-summary-11-04.pdf), 27 October 2005.

² Chris Patterson, "Research Report: VLTs—What Are The Odds of Texas Winning?" Texas Public Policy Foundation, March 2005, (www.texaspolicy.com/pdf/2005-03-vlt.pdf), 27 September, 2005, 7-8.

³ Earl Grinols, *Gambling in America: Costs and Benefits*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 88, (http://books.google.com/books?id=cxtelGb3ugQC&pg=PA88&lpg=PA88&dq=grinols+casino+job+loss+42+percent&source=bl&ots=Rew3AKkbrw&sig=-S7IRWmrU3DJmH3LTQBcAo5f48&hl=en&ei=I-ZZTK7qNJD2tgOsOpSbCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CBoQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q&f=false), 04 August 2010.