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VANCOUVER FIGHTS PROPOSED CASINO

Once a supporter of the Cowlitz casino project, Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard on Monday voiced his “strong opposition” to the project.

The city has submitted comments three times, Pollard said, but the preliminary Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) still does not address its concerns.

“You can’t just ignore us and expect us to roll over for you,” Pollard said.

The city’s concerns include:

- traffic snarls on the interstates and over the Interstate 5 and Interstate 205 bridges
- increased competition for affordable local housing
- increased crime rates
- increased bankruptcies and other fallout due to problem gambling

The City Council plans to discuss the issue and pass a resolution May 7. Pollard said he will ask other local governments, community leaders, businesses and citizens to join Vancouver in voicing opposition to the proposed casino to the federal Department of the Interior.

Pollard said that the low-paying jobs a casino would bring to the county are “not the kind of jobs that we see for the future of our community.”

Moreover, he said, the application process has not been transparent, and the needs the tribe identified in its recently released Business Plan are “unreasonable.”

Additionally, the mayor said the preliminary Final EIS has “one fundamental thing missing: consideration of a smaller, more appropriately sized casino site to the north of Clark County, closer to the center of the Cowlitz population and historic Cowlitz tribal lands. Why is that option missing? Because it is simply more profitable to locate a casino as close as possible to a major metropolitan area.”

Cowlitz Tribal Council member Phil Harju addresses Pollard's criticism in a story posted on *The Columbian* Web site, saying, "These 152 acres will be our homeland and our initial reservation."

This illustrates CARS' contention: The land owned by Cowlitz developer David Barnett at Exit 16 *is* not the tribe's homeland. It only would *become* the tribe's homeland *if it were taken into trust*. The tribe's federally adjudicated homeland is to the north, primarily in northern Cowlitz and Lewis counties.

As Clark County's largest city, Vancouver's voice is important and one that Citizens Against Reservation Shopping has been encouraging since Ed Lynch established the citizens group in 2005.

Please [contact the mayor](#) to thank him for taking a stand against the proposed casino and [encourage the council members](#) as they discuss the issue and produce a resolution.

[Read Mayor Pollard's statement.](#)

Read the story in [The Columbian](#).

Read the story in [The Vancouver Business Journal](#).