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From: **LRCA Civic Association** <lrcacivicasociation@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Jan 30, 2024 at 11:21 AM

Subject: Virginia Senate Bill 675

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2033 Stephanie Marie

Falls Church, VA 22043
January 29, 2024

Members of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
and
Members of the Virginia State Senate
Virginia Senate
Richmond, VA

Re: Virginia Senate Bill 675

I am writing on behalf of the Lemon Road Civic Association (LRCA) to express concern about Senate Bill 675. The LRCA, with about 140 member households, represents the area along Idylwood Road between Virginia Route 7 and Great Falls Street. This is in the Dranesville District of Fairfax County. Our neighborhood is represented in the Virginia Senate by Senator Saddam Salim.

The original purpose of the Virginia legislation on casinos was to assist economically distressed Cities. These cities typically had large tracts of land available at low cost. The circumstances of Fairfax County, and Tysons, are very different.

Our concerns about Senate Bill 675 are entirely unrelated to the revenue-sharing formula. Our concerns include:

- Traffic congestion - The additional traffic would exacerbate existing traffic congestion in Fairfax County, which is severe in peak hours;
- Erosion of neighboring real estate values - Research from the National Association of Realtors reports that adding a casino to a community generally lowers home values in high-density areas;
- Distorted local economy - Jobs created by casinos are typically lower-paying, with limited opportunities for advancement, in comparison with other activities for which Tysons is well-suited, such as technology or health care;
- Social and economic stability - Research has shown that the introduction of casinos often leads to increased bankruptcy rates among local residents and small businesses due to gambling addiction and resultant financial strain.

While it is true that the office market is going through a difficult period, it is also true that Tysons has remained a buoyant location for new residential development. Tysons has the potential to develop into a modern city with desirable urban residential neighborhoods. Fairfax County Supervisor Walter Alcorn was closely involved in the development of the Comprehensive Plan for the urbanization of Tysons when he was a Planning Commissioner. As Supervisor Alcorn has pointed out in a letter dated January 23, 2024, the casino proposal is destabilizing for Tysons.

Citizen opposition to the Bill began in northern Fairfax County, and then spread to western Fairfax County. Yesterday, the Fairfax County Federation of Civic Associations announced its opposition to the Bill. Thus, citizen opposition to the Bill is now Countywide.

Senate Bill 675 is undesirable and unwanted. Accordingly, the LRCA urges you to disapprove it.

I would like to express our appreciation to Senator Salim, Senator Jennifer Boysko, Supervisor Alcorn, and Dranesville District Supervisor Jimmy Bierman for representing the interests and wishes of area residents in a clear manner, by opposing the Bill.

Sincerely,
Karen Ram

President
Lemon Road Civic Association