

Casino group's report suggests \$66 million to Adams County

No Casino group says findings are one-sided.

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A report commissioned by Mason Dixon Resort officials estimates a casino proposed for Adams County would invest \$66 million into the local economy each year, generate as much as \$37 million in annual state tax revenues and create 375 full-time jobs.

The report was compiled by Econsult Corporation, a Philadelphia-based consulting company that has developed impact reports for other state casinos, including the Valley Forge Convention Center and Foxwoods Casino, as well as casinos in Kansas City and Iowa.

"We wanted a study from a company that is familiar to the state Gaming Control Board and whose reputation is beyond reproach," said David La Torre, a spokesperson for Mason Dixon Resort and Casino. "Our report has to be accurate. That's why we brought in Econsult."

But Keith Miller, a former business consultant for Strategic Planning Associates and a member of No Casino Gettysburg, argued the report's

projections are one-sided.

"Most impact reports show at least some of the negatives, but here you only have the positives," Miller said. "Sure, it shows the casino in a good light but half the scale is missing."

Contacted later, La Torre countered, saying, "It's one-sided because there aren't two sides to this. It's hard to find negatives when you're going to create hundreds of jobs and provide millions in local tax relief."

La Torre said the report will be submitted to the Gaming Control Board on the April 7 deadline to apply for the state's last remaining Category 3 gaming license. The casino is proposed by Gettysburg businessman David LeVan, who hopes to convert the Eisenhower Hotel and Conference Center -- located south of the Gettysburg battlefield on Emmitsburg Road -- to a gaming resort with 600 slot machines and 50 table games.

Of the \$66 million projected to come to Adams County each year, \$51 million is estimated to come from increased hotel operations and \$15 million from visitor spending. In addition to the 375 full-time jobs projected, the report estimates 326 more will indirectly be created from the existence of the casino and 195 positions will be added from visitor spending. La Torre said these jobs would include such businesses as glass, stone, and cement manufacturers that would benefit from the construction of the casino.

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Likewise, the report estimates 93,000 overnight visitors will come to the casino each year and 49,600 guests will stay in hotels surrounding the casino. But Miller said he didn't think these projections were accurate.

"If you're going to come to the casino and gamble then you're not driving down the road at the end of the night to get to your hotel," he said.

The report estimates as much as \$16 million in employee wages will be earned each year and the casino would add \$3 million in local taxes and \$37 million in state tax money. During a meeting with small-business owners earlier this year, LeVan promised to give preference to Adams County residents when hiring for the casino and to local vendors when buying products for the casino.

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