



Oulton Broad Leisure Ltd.

South Pier, Royal Plain, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0AE
Telephone: 01502 512793
Facsimile: 01502 566008

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Mr B Blizzard MP
27 Milton Road East
Lowestoft
Suffolk
NR32 1NT

all

Dear Mr Blizzard,

PROPOSED GAMBLING BILL - The Henley Report predicts more losers than winners.

I am sure you are aware that the proposed Gambling Bill was recently published by DCMS and the All Party Scrutiny Committee are due to deliver their recommendations to the Government by the 7th April 2004.

A recent report, produced by the Henley Centre (in association with consumer trend experts BrandDriver) analyses the "Economic and Social Impacts of the proposed new Gambling Bill" and raises a number of serious questions.

The Henley Centre Report indicates that the Bill as currently proposed fails to achieve the balance of necessary safeguards both socially and economically. It benefits two new market sectors (Vegas style casinos and new media) but hugely disadvantages much of the existing traditional UK market, will damage communities, limit customer choice and do nothing to regenerate areas most in need.

The Henley Report Highlights:

- * The Nation will gamble an extra £1 billion per year by 2010
- * The Government will gain at least an extra £400 million in tax
- * New style `Vegas` type casinos will form a significant part of the UK market
- * Internet, interactive and mobile phone gambling will grow

BUT

- * Thousands of traditional family owned businesses will disappear
- * Social clubs, pubs, bingo halls, seaside and inland arcades will all suffer
- * Significant redundancies in community based established businesses will offset employment gains in new sectors
- * The number of problem gamblers will grow to over 700,000 by 2010

We operate as operators of amusement and gaming machines in the local area and employ up to 50 people. As my local MP I have decided to write to you to express both some general and specific concerns that I have with the proposed Bill in its current format and that have been highlighted by the Report. My first concern is that New style casino resort complexes will be so vastly superior in terms of size, range of product offering etc. that new and existing visitors will

Directors: D. P. Moss · L. G. Moss

Registered Office: Town Wall House, Balcerne Hill, Colchester CO3 3AD
Registered Office No: 1420486 England
V.A.T. Reg. No: 460 3436 68



Tel: 01502 · 512793

naturally gravitate towards these 'emporiums', slowly destroying much of the existing seaside economy. Resort and large casinos will be adult gambling environments providing scant impetus for social and tourism led regeneration.

I am also concerned regarding FEC's/Category D machines. This Bill allows a discretion to introduce an age restriction for Category D machines by means of Secondary Legislation*. Such a move would appear likely to 'wipe-out' the seaside entertainment's industry. There are no grounds for this measure as our research (ORB) has shown. This potential change will make future investment in the industry an unrealistic prospect. This position is totally unacceptable as it will significantly affect businesses who have for many years provided much needed investment into coastal resorts.

* The draft currently contains wide discretion for the introduction of many restrictions which would fundamentally undermine the industry and appear not to be the subject of consultation.
Remedy: Remove the enabling clause, allowing an age restriction for Category D machines only through Primary Legislation with full consultation, should evidence from research prove that change is required.

I hope that you will be able to make representation to the Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP, Cabinet Minister ultimately responsible, Lord McIntosh of Haringey, the Minister with responsibility for the Bill, and John Greenway MP, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.

I do hope that you are able to help us by contacting the Minister and members of the Scrutiny Committee, and I look forward to hearing from you in due course,

Yours sincerely



David Moss
Managing Director