



Testimony on S.2363 and H.3680 An Act Fostering Intercity Passenger Rail Fund

Joint Committee on Transportation

Roy Nascimento/ Travis Condon

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Good afternoon, thank you Chairs Crighton and Arciero and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation. My name is Roy Nascimento, President and CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, a non-profit business led organization focused on advancing the economy of the twenty-seven communities of North Central Massachusetts. We represent about 700 members in the region.

I am speaking in support of Senate Bill 2363 and House Bill 3680, An Act Fostering Intercity Passenger Rail Fund. These bills would create a Region D gaming license—consisting of Ashburnham, Fitchburg, Leominster, Lunenburg, and Westminster—while dedicating revenues to critical transportation infrastructure. As we look for ways to improve and invest in the economy of North Central Massachusetts, we believe that these bills have the potential for a tremendous positive impact for economic development and tourism in North Central Massachusetts and the entire Commonwealth.

Our area has traditionally suffered from higher unemployment than other parts of the Commonwealth. A casino project would aid job creation and attract further investment, while recapturing crucial gaming dollars currently lost to neighboring states, attracting underserved players from New Hampshire, and further cementing the region as a tourism destination.

What makes these bills particularly compelling is the InterCity Regional Passenger Rail Fund. Twenty-five percent of gross gaming revenues from Region D would be dedicated exclusively to expanding passenger and commuter rail, beginning with the Route 2 Corridor.

This creates a direct connection between gaming revenue and infrastructure investments North Central Massachusetts desperately needs. Improved rail service would enhance connectivity to greater Boston while improving interconnectivity between communities along the rail line for employment, healthcare, education, and daily needs. This would support workforce mobility, reduce traffic congestion and environmental impacts, and attract business investment.

As the Commonwealth works to promote regional equity, North Central Massachusetts and Worcester County have been largely left out when it comes to gaming. This legislation addresses two critical needs simultaneously: economic development and transportation infrastructure. The creation of Region D with dedicated passenger rail funding represents forward-thinking policy that will benefit generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.