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**Testimony of Councilman Frank DiCicco
HSP Submerged Lands Application
November 15, 2007**

Good afternoon. My name is Frank DiCicco and I am the Councilman for the First Councilman District, which encompasses the site in question.

I'm frustrated that we're here today to discuss this application and I'm irritated that this Administration permitted this application in the first place.

From my understanding, the legal authority of the City is questionable, at best, in this matter. However, I'll allow those legal questions to be discussed by those with greater expertise and knowledge than I have. Whatever the case, I have no doubt that whatever decision is made, the decision will be appealed. That means another court battle. That means thousands of dollars more in attorneys fees. That means wasted time and wasted money.

And why?

Because a private entity isn't getting what it wants. What it thinks it deserves. And this company will stamp its feet, will cry foul and will bully its neighbors until they win. And rather than stand up to the bully, this City's Administration would rather roll over than make sure this project is done right.

That's why I have been and will continue to stand up -- because no one else in city government will.

Over the past several months, I've asked reasonable questions and raised reasonable concerns about this project:

- There has been no economic impact study to determine the costs associated with casinos (primarily infrastructure and public safety) or the impact that gaming may have on nearby businesses. For example, there has been speculation that restaurants and liquor establishments in Old City and South Street will be negatively impacted by the entertainment options offered at the gaming facilities. In addition, it is unclear what impact the casinos will have on port operations. Because the City, the State and the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board has failed to study these impacts, claims of economic benefits, job creation and revenue generation remain unproven.
- The Philadelphia Police Department has pledged to increase the number of officers in proximity to the casinos. In my October 8, 2007 letter to Commissioner Johnson, I asked several specific questions on the deployment of these officers. To date, I have not received a response.
- The independent traffic review that City Council is conducting has pointed to several concerns that have yet to be addressed by the operators, the Streets Department or the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Specifically, PennDOT has failed to provide necessary data to any party involved. Additionally, it has become clear that the Girard Avenue interchange project will not be completed until 2016 and that the interchange will be closed completely during specific periods. No study has taken these facts into account and therefore an adequate traffic mitigation plan has not been created.
- This issue will directly impact the Administration of Mayor-elect Nutter and his Administration must have the opportunity to weigh in on this important topic.

To date, these issues have been ignored. Until they are addressed, I can't comprehend how the Department, in good conscience, can approve this application.

What's more important? Appeasing a multi-million dollar bully whose principals don't even live in the City? Or knowing that you've done the right thing by the City, its residents and our future?

I urge you to stand with me.

Thank you.