

Gambling with Our Future:
Casino San Pablo's Impact on Local Communities
One Year After the Introduction of Slot Machines

A report prepared by
The East Bay Coalition Against Urban Casinos
www.StopUrbanCasino.org

Introduction

The Lytton Band of Pomo Indians first installed slot machines into Casino San Pablo in August of 2005. They argued that these machines would not create the criminal, social and societal problems about which the casino's opponents were concerned. The findings of this report clearly refute all claims of little or no negative results from introduction of slot machines to the casino. Evidence shows that since the 2005 introduction of slot machines there have been increases in police and ambulance calls to the casino as well as increases in crime both at the casino and within the surrounding neighborhoods. However, the most disturbing aspect of this report is the fact that these negative effects on the local communities began to occur very rapidly, less than one year after the introduction of slot machines to the casino, and it is likely that additional problems will become visible in the near future.

Key Findings

The installation of slot machines at Casino San Pablo has resulted in a significant rise in calls for emergency service to the casino and has led to increases in specific crimes within the communities surrounding the casino. This report provides a brief history of the casino's use of gaming devices, and utilizing data from police and dispatching records, details the net increases in both emergency calls and crime.

These increases have led to a larger negative impact to the surrounding communities than can be captured by numbers. A scan of 2005 & 2006 news coverage discovered several stories of crime related to the casino, two of which are highlighted at the end of this report. These examples underscore the fact that the remarkable raw data gathered cannot portray a comprehensive picture of the increases in criminal activity. The data provides quantifiable evidence of crime increases; however, the ripple effect within these communities extends far beyond what the numbers explain.

In their report, *The Social and Economic Impact of Urban Casinos*, William Evans and Julie Topoleski found that four years after a casino opens bankruptcy rates, violent crime, auto thefts and larceny rates increase 10% in counties with a casino.¹ Furthermore, a 2006 study released by Attorney General Bill Lockyer suggests that incidents of rape, murder and other types of violent crimes increase in communities with casinos.² The data included in this report supports Lockyer's contention that the introduction of casinos and slot machines results in negative impacts on the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Emergency Dispatch Calls to Casino San Pablo: 2004-2006

Emergency calls to casino increased: 341%

Ambulance calls to the casino increased: 233%

Increase in trespassing calls near casino: 343%

*Data obtained from City of Richmond
Emergency Dispatch, City of San Pablo
Police Department, and Contra Costa Health
Department*

¹ Evans, William. Topoleski, Julie, *The Social and Economic Impact of Urban Casinos*. The National Bureau of Economic Research. No. 9198. September 2002.

² Simmons, Charlene. *Gambling in The Golden State: 1998-Forward*. California Research Bureau. May 2006.

The communities of San Pablo and Richmond have had to contend with increases in crime, traffic and medical emergencies as a result of the casino. The potential negative impact of building two additional, Las Vegas-size casinos in North Richmond and Pointe Molate combined with the continued expansion of Casino San Pablo would further exacerbate the negative consequences for East Bay communities.

Background

Casino San Pablo operated as a non-tribal card room until October of 2003 when control of the site was transferred to the federal government in order to be held in trust for the Lytton Band of Pomo Indians. The Lyttons had originally planned to place 5,000 slot machines, convention center and hotel into the casino. After objections were raised and the state legislature refused to allow large scale casino operations in the Bay area to be run by tribes with no historical land claims, that attempt failed.

On August 1, 2005, the Lytton Tribe installed 500 slot machines in Casino San Pablo. The number of machines was increased to 800 machines in early 2006, then to 1,048 machines in September of 2006. The Lytton Tribe argued that these slot machines operate as Class II bingo games under federal law and therefore can be operated without a state compact. The decision to install the Class II slot machines has resulted in a lack of regulation, no payments to the state, removed the requirement of community impact reviews and allowed the casino to operate without state and local approval.³

The opacity of a Class II slot machine definition in the law has led to problems regulating these machines and prompted concerns on the federal level, provoking the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) to consider reforming the laws that govern the machines. These proposed regulations would stipulate that the machines being operated at Casino San Pablo are not class II gaming devices and cannot be legally operated without a compact. Casino San Pablo's use of these machines has fundamentally changed the environment both in the Casino and in the surrounding urban areas.

Methodology

The data for this report comes from two primary sources: the City of San Pablo Police Department and the City of Richmond's dispatching center. The documents obtained were made available through requests for public information and have been supplied in total by the above mentioned law enforcement agencies. The data being utilized extends from 2004 through 2006, allowing examination of both a year before and a year after the inception of the new gaming devices.

³ Rose, Nelson. *Bingo or A Casino? Class II Gaming Machines in San Pablo*. 2005. Pg 4.

Results

The data for this section is divided into three subcategories. The first examines the increases in the number of calls for emergency service to both law enforcement and for emergency medical care. These drastic increases result in a higher demand on the public service agencies in the communities of Richmond and San Pablo. The second shows the increases of specific crimes at the casino. The third section utilizes dispatching history to document the increases in crime within the neighborhoods surrounding the casino.

Emergency Responses at Casino

Police, Fire and EMS responses *increased* after the installation of the slot machines (2004-2006).

Emergency calls increased from 203 in 2004 to 895 in 2006. Ambulance calls increased from 24 in 2004 to 80 in 2006.

*See Chart 1 & 2

Increases in Emergency Calls to the Casino: 341%

Increases in Ambulance Calls to the Casino: 233%

Crimes Occurring at Casino

Increases in specific types of crime *at* Casino San Pablo (2004-2006):

Vehicle theft increased from 14 in 2004/2005 to 53 in 2005/2006; Disturbance calls increased from 36 in 2004/2005 to 115 in 2005/2006; Burglary calls increased from 7 in 2004/2005 to 24 in 2005/2006.

*See Chart 3

Crime Increases at the Casino:

Vehicle Theft:	279%
Disturbance:	219%
Burglary:	243%

Crime in Neighborhoods Surrounding Casino

Increases in crime *at* the casino *and the* surrounding areas 2004-2006:

This section examines the increases in police calls both to Casino San Pablo and the communities adjacent to the casino. The data was provided in the form of crime reports from the San Pablo Police Department and from dispatch information from the Richmond Police Department. The geographic regions were selected based on a one mile or less proximity to Casino San Pablo, which includes North and East Richmond and Southern San Pablo.

Crime Increases at the Casino and in Surrounding Areas:

Trespassing:	343%
Drunk in Public:	100%
Drug Possession:	200%

Trespassing calls increased from 14 in 2004 to 62 in 2006; public drunkenness calls increased from 14 in 2004 to 28 in 2006; Drug possession calls increased from 6 in 2004 to 18 in 2006.

*See Chart 4

News Highlights

November 15, 2006 - "2 years for Sacramento woman in ID theft cases"

News reports by Henry Lee of the *San Francisco Chronicle* outline how a Sacramento woman became involved in an extensive identity theft scheme and used Casino San Pablo to gather cash advances using stolen credit cards.⁴ Penisha Cherie Williams used stolen financial information to receive credit cards and obtained between \$30,000 and \$70,000 in cash advances, credit purchases and withdrawals from banks and casinos.⁵

June 26, 2006 - "Arrest in bank robbery spree"

As reported by the *Marin Independent Journal* in June of 2006, a man described by the FBI as a "serial bank robber" and suspected of more than a dozen bank robberies in the Bay Area was arrested at the Casino San Pablo.⁶ James Moffit was taken into custody after officers recognized his picture on surveillance photos. Suspected of 15 bank robberies throughout the Bay Area, Moffit was captured as he entered the casino at 4 a.m.

October 3, 2005 - "Woman loses casino winnings in ATM robbery"

According to the *Fairfield Daily Republic* a woman was robbed of her winnings from Casino San Pablo she tried to deposit it in an ATM Sunday morning following a long night of gambling at the casino. According to Fairfield police, the woman was likely followed from inside the casino and later assaulted and robbed at a more isolated location. The woman's wrist was injured in the attack.

All three of these cases provide examples of how the casino fundamentally alters the environment in which it is located. The casino provides a myriad of opportunities for criminal activity and has the potential to attract a larger segment of the criminal population, increasing the possibility of economic, property and violent crimes to occur.

⁴ Lee, K. Henry. *2 Years for Sacramento Woman in ID Theft Cases*. *San Francisco Chronicle*. November 15, 2006.

⁵ McGregor W. Scott. *Sacramento County Woman Plead Guilty to Aggravated Identity Theft*. United States Attorney Eastern District. September 12, 2006, News Release.

⁶ Wolfeale, Joe. *Arrest in Bank Robbery Spree*. *Marin Independent Journal*. June 24, 2006.

Appendices

Chart 1:

911 Calls to Casino San Pablo

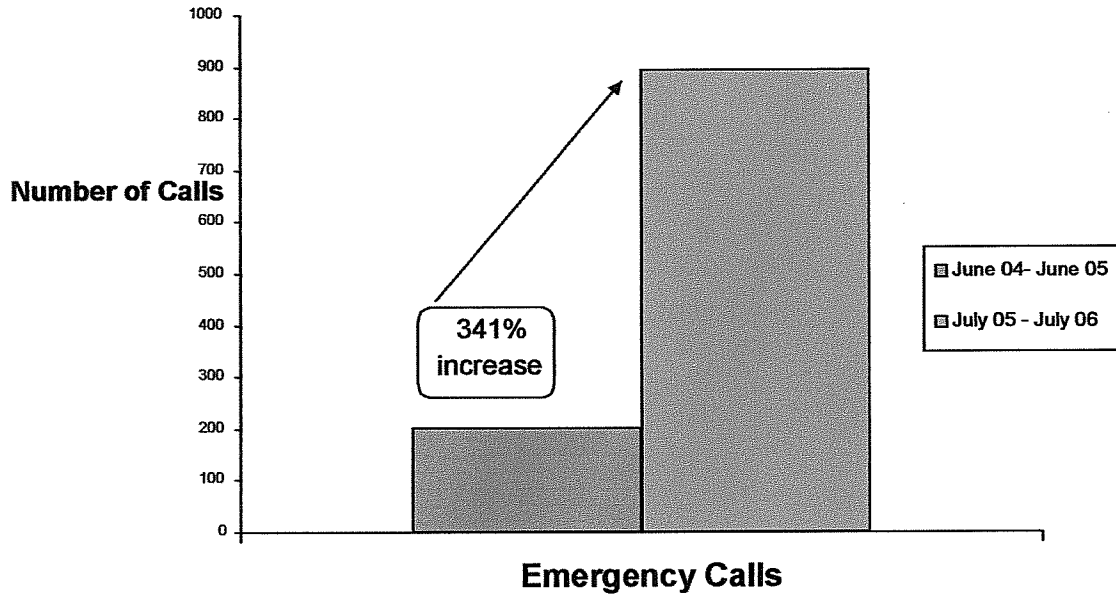


Chart 2:

Ambulance Calls to Casino San Pablo

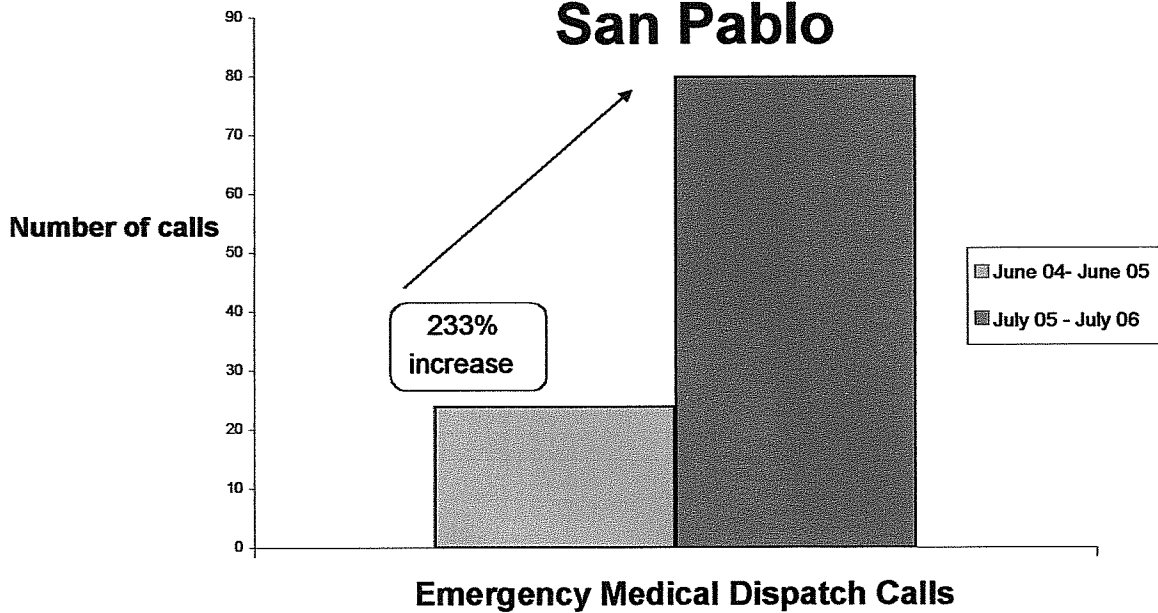


Chart 3:

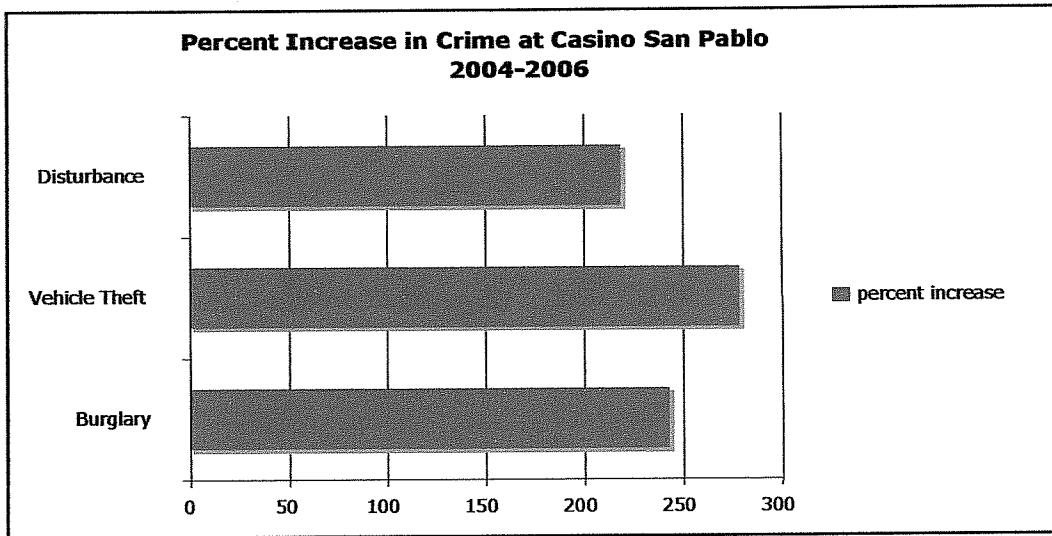


Chart 4:

