

Press Release

For Immediate Release
Campbellville, Ontario
Friday, March 16, 2012

On Wednesday, March 14, 2012 a meeting was held between CAW president, Ken Lewenza, and OHHA representatives. As a direct result of this meeting CAW Canada prepared and distributed the attached advisory.



Media advisory for Ontario comprehensive distribution

March 15, 2012

Ontario Gaming Reforms Must Include Workers and Public Input, CAW says

(Toronto) The national president of Canada's largest gaming workers union is urging the Province of Ontario and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation to engage in meaningful dialogue and consultation with their workers, unions and the public-at-large before instituting any further reforms to the gaming sector.

CAW President Ken Lewenza said the slate of recommendations released on March 12 as part of a provincially-mandated strategic business review conducted by the OLG will radically reshape Ontario's gaming sector, possibly for the worse, impacting thousands of workers and families.

"This is a total overhaul of a vitally important sector in Ontario's economy that will impact thousands of front-line workers who drive this business each and every day," Lewenza said. "I find it disheartening that no one thought to consider them a key stakeholder in this process."

Lewenza noted the report listed over 50 stakeholder groups directly consulted during the review process, none of whom represented the interests of OLG workers in casinos, racetracks, teletheatres and other gaming sites.

The OLG report estimates that over the next five years it will add 2,300 net new industry jobs, a prediction Lewenza said Ontarians should be wary of, since it does not consider the underlying quality of the jobs on offer.

"What we don't need now is for OLG to slash and burn good-paying gaming sector jobs only to replace them with double or triple the number of low-paying part-time and temporary jobs. That's not a net gain for Ontario," Lewenza said.

Within days of the report's release the OLG abruptly announced the closure of three slot operations in Windsor, Fort Erie and Sarnia, throwing 500 people out of work. Lewenza warned that additional recommendations to eliminate slot subsidies to racetracks and to encourage the use of privatization schemes may help pad the OLG's bottom line, but will wreak havoc on the good jobs this sector was meant to create.

"Our union is all for modernizing Ontario's gaming sector," Lewenza said. "But if 'modernization' is code for reckless privatization, that degrades job quality and creates greater income instability for workers, then that's not in our collective interest and the CAW will fight it every step of the way."

The CAW represents over 7,000 workers across Canada at Caesars Windsor Casino, Brantford Casino, Slots at Sudbury Downs, Great Blue Heron Casino, Edgewater Casino and the Woodbine Racetrack as well as other locations.

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