

November 29, 2022

Dear Member:

You have undoubtedly heard that the Broadway League has come out in opposition to a proposal to open a casino in Times Square. We wanted to lay out to you, our members, why we stand firmly against this latest plan. The Broadway League's mission is to promote live theater and its cultural significance, to safeguard our theaters and the Theater District. Right now, after a long recovery, audiences are rediscovering the magic of Broadway and visitors are returning to the restaurants all around Times Square. [Overall, New York City is on track to welcome nearly 57 million visitors by the end of 2022 and to surpass 2019 levels by 2024 – far faster than initially projected.](#) Clearly, we are heading in the right direction.

For progress to continue, we remain steadfast in our commitment to preserving the unique character of Broadway – a cultural icon synonymous with New York City – and ensuring that the area is conducive to the return of tourists, business travelers, office workers and theatergoers. *The proposed plan to bring a casino to Times Square would introduce widespread economic and operational disruption, unprecedented congestion, and decreased safety and security.*

We've looked closely at the facts and the research and believe a casino in Times Square would bring economic and social disruption, not development, to the deeply interconnected network of businesses that have made Broadway and Times Square an international destination.

[The overall economic impact of casinos has long been questioned by experts](#), but a few things are clear:

- [Casinos can bring economic benefits to under-developed areas where there are no competing businesses – not established business districts like Times Square.](#) By design, casino owners do all they can to keep visitors in the casino, gambling. That's why, for example, it's so hard to find a clock or window in any of them. That's why there are no clearly marked exits. And that's why they have so many offerings like restaurants, shops and entertainment venues of their own. Far from driving customers to neighboring businesses, the way theaters do, a Times Square casino would draw customers away from existing area restaurants, many of which are small businesses and constitute an integral part of the Broadway ecosystem. And let's be clear on another point: Whether they come for a day or a week, visitors to Times Square come on limited budgets that would be cannibalized by casino gambling. Every dollar spent at the craps table, roulette wheel or slot machine is a dollar not spent on a play, dinner, or a souvenir. This is cause for alarm.

- [The economic benefits of casinos dwindle over time.](#) At the largest casino in New Orleans, for example - by law the only land-based casino in Louisiana - gambling revenue has declined almost every year since its peak in 2008. By contrast, the Broadway theaters and restaurants a casino would disrupt have proven to grow the city's jobs and economy decade after decade. Pre-pandemic, Broadway generated \$14.7 billion in annual economic impact for the State of New York and supported nearly 100,000 jobs in New York City. Broadway shows draw approximately 40,000 people per day to the neighborhood (and nearly twice that number on days with matinee performances) and directly benefit area shops, restaurants, hotels, garages and vendors.
- [With the exception of Las Vegas, casinos don't draw tourists and rely heavily on local gamblers.](#) For the past 15 years, the Broadway League has worked hard to make Times Square more pedestrian friendly and welcoming to visitors. And we've succeeded! A casino that relies heavily on drawing tens of thousands of gamblers each day to an already established business district would significantly increase congestion and crowding around Times Square, without any of the economic boost associated with drawing regional, national and international visitors. In short, we'd get all the costs, and none of the benefits.

Times Square is not Atlantic City or Las Vegas, which exist primarily to promote gambling and are designed accordingly. Instead, what casino operators have proposed for Times Square is an unprecedented and dangerous experiment. As [the NY Times has reported](#), "Casinos built in the center of large cities are rare." Indeed, Philadelphia's two casinos are located "on the edge of the city and surrounded by large parking lots." Other cities, such as Boston and New Orleans, have located casinos on or near the waterfront, and even those have generated significant challenges.

We believe that putting at risk the significant headway we're making, at this crucial moment in the time of the life of Broadway and all of New York, is a bad bet.

That's why we oppose a proposed casino in Times Square.

All the best,



Charlotte St. Martin