

# Tories would end plan to build casinos, save Raceway if elected: MPP Lisa MacLeod

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If the PCs form Ontario's next government, they plan to throw a wrench into plans to build 29 new casinos across the province.

Flanked by two of her Queen's Park colleagues at the Rideau Carleton Raceway on Friday, Nepean-Carleton MPP Lisa MacLeod announced a PC government would wipe the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation's casino plan off the table.

Calling it an "empire building plan" by the OLG, MacLeod reiterated her worry that a new casino in Ottawa — widely expected to be built downtown — would spell the end of the Raceway.

The track's closure would put at least 500 racetrack staff out of work, said MacLeod.

Her concerns were echoed by Leeds-Grenville MPP Steve Clark and Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry's Jim McDonell.

Clark said the Liberal government's support for building the new casinos has "pitted community and community, neighbour against neighbour."

The PC plan involves giving racetrack operators first shot at buying slot machine operations in an effort to save the industry while still "providing a positive return to taxpayers."

The party has also suggested allowing referendums in municipalities being considered for a casino to allow residents to decide if their city is suitable for a new gambling facility.

The three politicians stressed the success of the existing Slots-at-Racetracks programs, which brings in \$1.2 billion each year.

Across the province, some 60,000 would be in jeopardy if the program was scrapped, they said.

Gary McDonald, who owns many of the horses at the track, said he's not sure what he would do if his livelihood was taken from him.

"It's my job, it's my income, it's my investment," McDonald said.

At 53, McDonald expects he would have a tough time finding new work if he suddenly finds himself out of a job.

McDonald got out of the restaurant business in his native Newfoundland years ago to devote his life to the horses at the Raceway.

"I don't know what the future would bring. My horse business will have no value and I will have no income."

The horses themselves could also be impacted by the Raceway's closure, with MacLeod expressing concern that hundreds of them could be put down. Unless, of course, her party can wrestle government away from the McGuinty Liberals and put their plan in place.

"This would stop a downtown Ottawa casino in its tracks," she said.

"It would save the Rideau Carleton Raceway and it would save the horses."

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