



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Gets Commitment From NYRA on Belmont Issue

JACK M. MARTINS February 15, 2011

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Senator Jack M. Martins received a commitment this week at the New York State Senate hearing on Racing and Wagering, for revitalization and investment at Belmont Racetrack from NYRA officials. The commitment was seen as “a very positive step forward” towards economic development and revitalization in the south lot of the Belmont property and improvements at the aging Belmont facility. Senator Martins received the commitment of investment of VLT (Video Lottery Terminal) revenues, generated at Aqueduct, from NYRA President Charles Hayward.

Senator Martins advocated for Belmont investment and revitalization of the Hempstead Turnpike corridor during testimony at the hearing. The goal, according to the Senator, was to create jobs and expand the tax base in the greater Belmont Racetrack area. The Senator questioned NYRA officials about direct commitment and investment for Belmont during hearing deliberations.

“NYRA was doing a lot of talking about Aqueduct, VLT revenues and its impact to communities and racing in New York State. What I didn’t hear was where Belmont stood in the conversation. That’s why I actively questioned NYRA and got the commitment to real investment of VLT revenues generated at Aqueduct to Belmont. My goal is to get revitalization projects in and around Belmont jumpstarted with the shovel hitting the earth,” said Senator Martins.

The agreement of NYRA leaders with investment in Belmont and revitalization efforts, according to Senator Martins, was a first for the greater community. “I know NYRA wants to be a good neighbor. What we needed was their commitment to real dollars being spent on revitalization, improvements at Belmont and a spirit of cooperation. I was glad to hear President Hayward’s comments and offer of working with with the community. Working together we will get things done,” Martins said.

Senator Martins reiterated his support for the visioning efforts whose thrust is the creation of private sector jobs in the Hempstead Turnpike corridor. According to the Senator, NYRA’s active participation, as one of the largest community stakeholders, is an important part of the effort. “I’m pleased that we have it on record that NYRA is involved and engaged in this important initiative for the Elmont, Floral Park, South Floral Park and Franklin Square communities,” Senator Martins said adding, “this has to be a team effort with everyone working together.”

The hearing, at the State Capitol, focused on VLT revenues and the future of horse racing in New York State. Senators explored the conditions of racing, the impact of VLTs, and investment of revenues from the Aqueduct facility. “Now that VLTs are going to be operational at Aqueduct, we need to look at where those revenues are going to spent, invested and working for the host communities. It’s our job to make sure that we not only get our fair share, but wisely use these revenues to revitalize, create jobs and expand the tax base which will help us relieve the property tax burden on homeowners.”

Senator Martins also expressed his continuing support for the visioning plan for the development of the south parking lot at Belmont for “real, sustained economic development.”

“Our collective focus is to get this process moving, bring all the stakeholders to the table, outline an action plan and get it started,” said Senator Martins.