F. Events Occurring During On-Going Analysis of Application by DOI in Washington, D.C. (May 1, 1995-June 8, 1995)

Most Interior Department witnesses interviewed said the decision to deny the application was not made on a particular day or at any particular meeting. Rather, they describe a gradual process of analysis and discussion. No witness said that there was any Indian Gaming Management Staff employee or other Washington-based DOI staffer advocating approval of the application. Even those who felt there was no "detriment" believed substantial work was needed to meet the "best interest" of the tribes test of IGRA Section 20. Several current and former DOI employees said virtually all off-reservation gaming applications face an uphill battle for approval because strong local political opposition surrounds most of these proposals.[345]

By May 17, IGMS staff had reviewed and discussed with Duffy and Sibbison the information that came in after the Feb. 8 meeting, which indicated that local governments had changed their positions from neutral or weak opposition to strengthened opposition. Between April 30 and May 17, Interior officials had several meetings with applicant and opponent representatives.

1. Collier, Duffy and Skibine Meet with Congressman Oberstar on May 2, 1995

On Thursday, April 27, Congressman Oberstar's office called DOI to schedule a meeting with Duffy and Collier regarding "Hudson gaming."[346] Collier, Duffy and Skibine all attended

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[345]The actions of former Secretary Lujan centralizing the procedures for review of such applications, and DOI's prior policy and proposed rulemaking pronouncements, tend to corroborate this view. *See supra* at 42-43.

[346]Note from Doris Johnson to John Duffy, April 27, 1995.