



**FROM:** Joey Awonohopay, Chairman, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin  
**SUBJECT:** Media Memo on Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Kenosha Project  
**DATE:** February 14, 2025

As Chairman of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, I am reaching out to share an update on the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Kenosha project and, more importantly, to express our optimism for the road ahead. This project represents an opportunity for growth and economic revitalization for the Tribe, the Kenosha community, and the state of Wisconsin.

One of the major steps in obtaining federal approval of the Project is compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). As part of the NEPA requirement, a detailed Environmental Assessment (EA) of the project was drafted at the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The EA draft was completed in spring of 2024, and then revised over the summer and fall at the direction of the BIA. In November, the EA was administratively completed and delivered to the BIA Office of Indian Gaming (OIG) subject to final review.

**Working with the Trump Administration:**

Once OIG finalizes its review, the public will have the opportunity to comment on the EA. This will offer the community a chance to once again engage with and understand the full scope of the benefits this project will bring to the Tribe and people of southeastern Wisconsin. The EA has shown no negative impact, and we are hopeful that BIA will determine the project is beneficial to both the Menominee and the Kenosha Community. Based on that determination, BIA will send their determination to Governor Tony Evers for his concurrence. While the Governor has up to one year to review the application, we are optimistic his decision will come even sooner, reflecting the widespread support and clear advantages this project offers.

President Trump and his administration have made it clear they are interested in creating jobs and streamlining rule processes to increase efficiency within the government. Their commitments to these ideas are a positive indicator that OIG will complete their final review of the EA, and that we are well-positioned to achieve project approval.

**A Transformative Opportunity:**

The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Kenosha project is a major economic opportunity – not just for the Menominee Indian Tribe but for the entire Kenosha community and the state of Wisconsin. We are excited for all to feel the many benefits the project will bring, including construction jobs and employment for over 1,000 people once the project is fully built out as well as attracting more than 2.4 million annual visitors, with nearly 1.6 million coming from outside the state of Wisconsin. This project will also have a positive ripple effect on other local businesses in southeastern Wisconsin.

For the Tribe, this project is more than a business venture; it represents the best opportunity for the Menominee to address the significant challenges facing our people. The income generated will allow us to address critical issues faced by our roughly 9,000 enrolled tribal members, including improving essential infrastructure, education, and health care on our Reservation,

which ranks among the poorest in both Wisconsin and the nation. With this project, we aim to become both a leading job generator and an example of economic empowerment in Wisconsin.

**Next Steps in the Approval Process:**

As we navigate these final steps, updates on our progress will be shared as they become available, and you can find more information on the project at [casino.hardrock.com/Kenosha](http://casino.hardrock.com/Kenosha).

Together, we can bring this project to life and deliver lasting benefits for the Kenosha community, the state of Wisconsin, and the Menominee Indian Tribe.

Sincerely,

Joey Awonohopay  
Chairman  
Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin

**Project Facts:**

- The proposed project will have a significant, local economic impact, with early estimates indicating total new **development cost of around \$360 million**, including approximately **\$104 million in construction payroll** with almost **1,000 construction jobs** for 18 months.
- The planned casino and hotel is estimated to **employ more than 1,000 people** once the project is fully built out. The average annual earnings for full-time equivalent employees is projected to be about **\$54,000**. Nearly **\$10 million in annual employee benefits** will be invested in the community. The project will generate **nearly \$21 million in annual payroll taxes**.
- More than half of the nearly \$51 million in annual purchases for goods and services for on-going operations will come from **in-state vendors**. The project is estimated to generate **more than 2.4 million annual visits** to the casino and entertainment center, with nearly 1.6 million of those visits coming from outside the state of Wisconsin.
- Total direct, induced, and indirect annual impact on the economic output is estimated at **over \$352 million for Kenosha County** and **almost \$492 million for the State of Wisconsin** as a whole.
- The proposed project will include a Hard Rock Hotel with **150 rooms**, a Hard Rock Cafe, and a Hard Rock Live venue. In addition, the project includes a gaming area with about **1,500 slot machines** and an estimated **50 table games**. There will also be seven restaurants, three bars, and a retail gift shop.
- The proposed project design will be consistent with other Hard Rock casinos and resorts, including Rockford, in the U.S. in terms of decor, memorabilia, service standards, gifts, retail, entertainment events, and promotions.
- The investment in the local community will help make Kenosha even more appealing to visitors and residents alike. It will provide another local option for entertainment and dining as well and generate new consumer spending outside the casino.