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The _____ MICHIGAN GAMING _____ Newsletter



HOUSE REGULATORY REFORM COMMITTEE REFERS HHR AND DISASSOCIATED PERSONS BILLS TO HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

On February 25, the House Regulatory Reform Committee referred two gaming bills to the House Ways and Means Committee – HB 4686 relating to the disassociated persons list and SB 661 relating to historic horse racing (HHR) machines.

As previously reported in [Volume 26, Issue 8 of the Michigan Gaming Newsletter](#), the House Regulatory Reform Committee met to discuss HB 4686 last week, but did not vote on it at that meeting. HB 4686 would modify the disassociated persons list for problem gamblers in Michigan, allowing a person with a lifetime ban to petition for removal after five years. This week, the House Regulatory Reform Committee referred the bill with H-2 Substitute to the House Ways and Means Committee with a vote of 14-0. There was no further discussion on the bill.

The House Regulatory Reform Committee also took up SB 661, relating to HHR machines. SB 661 would amend the Horse Racing Law of 1995 to allow wagers on horse races that occurred in the past, among other changes. Several amendments were offered and adopted to the bill at the meeting, including:

1. H-2 Substitute for SB 661, which passed favorably and was adopted.
2. A clarification that live horse racing has to be occurring at any location offering HHR machines. This amendment passed 13-0 with one pass, and was adopted.
3. A requirement that a local ordinance must approve the offering of HHR machines, offered by Rep. Alex Garza. This amendment passed 13-0 with one pass, and was adopted.

In addition, there were three amendments offered by Rep. Matt Hall that were not adopted, including:

1. A clarification to note that Internet gaming would not be allowed on HHR machines. This amendment was not adopted, with a vote of 7-4 with three passes.
2. An assurance that the introduction of HHR machines would not affect the School Aid Fund. There was discussion on the amendment, and it was noted that there would be future opportunities to consider the impact on the School Aid Fund and Detroit finances. This amendment was not adopted, with a vote of 6-7 with one pass.
3. A clarification that both a state and local referendum would be required – as provided by the Michigan Constitution – before the bill could take effect. This amendment was not adopted, with a vote of 4-7 with three passes.

A vote was taken to send SB 661, as amended, to the House Ways and Means Committee with a recommendation for passage. The bill was favorably reported by a vote of 8-6.

WILLIAM HILL ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH GRAND TRAVERSE BAND OF OTTAWA AND CHIPPEWA INDIANS

William Hill and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians announced a long-term partnership earlier this week. William Hill will be Grand Traverse Band's exclusive provider of online sports betting and iGaming, and will open a brick and mortar sportsbook at Turtle Creek Casino & Hotel in Williamsburg, Michigan, with regulatory approval.

The William Hill Sports Book will be located in the current Onyx Sports Bar at Turtle Creek, with a satellite location at Leelanau Sands Casino & Lodge in Peshawbestown. It is anticipated that both sportsbooks will open prior to the 2020

football season, with iGaming and online sports betting to be launched once Michigan regulations are in place.

"We are pleased to have found a great partner in the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and look forward to working with the Tribe to bring a leading retail and online sports betting experience to sports fans in Michigan," said Joe Asher, CEO of William Hill U.S. "Michigan will be a key state in William Hill's U.S. expansion due to its large population and deep rooted-sports culture with so many popular college and pro sports teams."

"It was important for us to find a partner with a great sports betting and gaming brand that has proven experience throughout the US market," said Michael Shrader, CEO of Grand Traverse Resort & Casinos. "William Hill's expertise in sports betting operations and marketing and strategic media partnerships will ensure that we are able to attract customers from throughout the State of Michigan to the online products while offering another great amenity to attract guests to our casinos. We look forward to working with William Hill to develop the best sports book in northern Michigan at Turtle Creek Casino."

FIREKEEPERS CASINO HOTEL PRESENTS REVENUE SHARING PAYMENTS OF OVER \$24.7 MILLION

At an event on February 26, the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi (NHBP), owners of FireKeepers Casino Hotel, announced that combined revenue sharing payments to the State of Michigan and the FireKeepers Local Revenue Sharing Board (FLRSB) have exceeded \$217 million since 2009. This was the fifth consecutive record contribution, with combined payments of over \$24.7 million to the State of Michigan and the FLRSB.

The payment to the State totaled more than \$18.9 million, an increase of 2.31% over the 2019 payment, while the payment to the FLRSB totaled

over \$5.8 million with a 1.86% increase. In total, the NHBP has contributed over \$162.7 million to the State and \$54.8 million to the FLRSB since FireKeepers' doors opened in 2009.

“Contributing over \$217 million creates an awesome impact for our state and local region and this announcement is a milepost of great pride for tribal members of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi and the staff and management of FireKeepers Casino Hotel,” said Jamie Stuck, NHBP Tribal Council Chairperson.

The check to the State of Michigan was presented to Rep. Matt Hall of Michigan's 63rd District, which includes the location of FireKeepers. The check to the FLRSB was presented to Secretary Derek King, who is a Calhoun County Commissioner.

FireKeepers and the NHBP focuses on reinvesting in local communities and supporting charitable endeavors. In 2017, The Fire Hub restaurant was opened in Battle Creek, which combines a restaurant and bakery with the Kendall Street Food Pantry. At the event this week, the NHBP presented a check for \$11,242 from 2019 restaurant proceeds to Peter Vogel, Executive Director of The Food Bank of South Central Michigan.

“The Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi are the best owners in the hospitality industry, providing a fantastic package of salaries and benefits to attract the spectacular men and women who form our great team, plus the substantial investment dollars to maintain and expand our resort. Every day we witness the physical manifestation of this support, as construction of our second hotel tower moves forward in anticipation of a grand opening late this year,” said Kathy George, CEO at FireKeepers Casino Hotel.

Groundbreaking on the new 200-room hotel tower began in 2019, and is projected to be completed in late 2020.