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MGCB Signs Agreement to Enable Multi-State Internet Poker

On May 23, the Michigan Gaming Control Board (MGCB) announced in a [press release](#) that Executive Director Henry Williams signed an agreement to permit internet poker players within Michigan to participate in multijurisdictional internet poker with players in Delaware, Nevada, and New Jersey. The agreement follows the passage of PA 327 in December 2020, which enabled the MGCB to enter a multijurisdictional poker compact.

"I am happy to announce Michigan has joined the multistate poker compact, and much of the increased tax revenue from multistate poker will go to support K-12 education in Michigan," exclaimed Williams. "By joining, Michigan will almost double the potential pool of participants in multistate poker games."

Michigan joins Delaware, Nevada, and New Jersey as a member of the Multi-State Internet Gaming Agreement. In Michigan however, multijurisdictional internet gaming is limited to poker. Three licensed operators with their associated platform providers currently offer internet poker in Michigan: MGM Grand Detroit with BetMGM, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians with World Series of Poker, and the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians with PokerStars.

"Michigan poker players will enjoy more options and will likely play for bigger money when they compete against players from other states," commented Senator Curtis Hertel, who sponsored the bill to enable multijurisdictional internet poker.

Licensed operators and platform providers "still have work to do before Michigan residents may join multistate poker games," noted Executive Director

Williams. To obtain MGCB authorization, operators must satisfy the conditions of the multijurisdictional agreement and conduct multistate poker exclusively with the jurisdictions that are party to the agreement.

Operators and platform providers must obtain approval for the use of new platforms and/or platform modifications, new remote gaming systems, and new game software that may be selected to provide multijurisdictional poker. Similarly, operators and platform providers must establish technical security standards for new data centers. MGCB approval must also be obtained prior to the use of servers located outside of Michigan to receive wagers.

The MGCB also requires licensure of any new suppliers, including platform providers, used to provide multistate poker. In addition to the registration of new vendors, new employees of operators and platform providers involved in multistate poker operations may be required to obtain occupational licenses.

The specific characteristics of each multistate poker operation will determine which steps will be required prior to launch. Accordingly, the MGCB issued a [notice](#) to focus the efforts of operators and platform providers seeking to offer multistate poker on these important considerations. Ultimately, these prerequisites, Williams explained, will enable the MGCB to “make sure Michigan residents are protected when they play multistate poker, and [the MGCB] will apply the same rigor to review of the new offering as [it has] other internet games.”

Governor Whitmer Urges DOI to Accelerate Decision on Federal Status of Grand River Bands

In a [letter](#) to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Debra Haaland, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer expressed concern for the consequences of issuing a concurrence with the affirmative two-part determination for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians to conduct gaming in Michigan.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) issued its determination in December 2020, and the deadline for Governor Whitmer’s decision is set for June 16, 2022.

Governor Whitmer cited the danger that her concurrence with the Little River Band’s determination may frustrate the Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians’ potential plans to open its own gaming facility on tribal lands near the proposed location of the Little River Band’s development.

“The impending deadline is particularly unworkable,” Whitmer commented, “because DOI is still considering whether to acknowledge the Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians.”

Governor Whitmer was critical of the DOI’s failure to offer any indication as to the likelihood of its acknowledgment of the Grand River Bands. Based on the DOI’s current plan to issue its proposed findings regarding the federal recognition of the Grand River Bands on or before October 12, 2022, Whitmer believes it may be “four months too late to enable an informed decision about whether to concur with the Little River Band’s two-part determination.”

To avoid potential conflict that may arise from issuing her decision on the Little River Band’s request prior to the DOI’s decision to recognize the Grand River Bands, Whitmer proposed two alternative courses of action. First, Whitmer suggested that the DOI issue its proposed finding of acknowledgement of the Grand River Bands by June 1, 2022. This accelerated schedule would permit Whitmer to consider the DOI’s finding in making her decision on the Little River Band’s determination. Alternatively, Whitmer urges the DOI to extend the current June 16 deadline for her decision on the Little River Band’s determination until after the DOI has issued its finding on the Grand River Bands.

“I am acutely aware of the importance of this decision to the Tribe, to the local community, to State-Tribal relations, and to the State of Michigan,” said Whitmer. “[I]t is critical that we

have this information available to enable us to properly weigh the various considerations and accurately assess the impact and consequences of this decision.”

MGCB Public Meeting Scheduled for Tuesday, June 7

The Michigan Gaming Control Board (“MGCB”) will hold a regular [public meeting](#) on Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at the MGCB’s Cadillac Place Office, 3062 W. Grand Boulevard, Suite L-700, Detroit, 48202-6062. Masks must be worn in the building and during the meeting. The meeting will begin at 9:30 AM and will also be accessible via Zoom.

The MGCB will consider approval of occupational licenses, supplier licenses, supplier license renewals, approval of new key persons, and the approval of some acknowledgements of violations among other issues. The full agenda for the June meeting may be found [here](#).

The meeting is open to the public, and comments from the public are welcomed and encouraged during the public comment portion of the meeting.

The meeting will also be accessible to the public via Zoom at this [link](#).