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MONTICELLO — New York racinos and racetracks are calling on Gov. Andrew Cuomo to rescind state support for a Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians casino in Bridgeville being reviewed by the federal

government.

New York's racinos say the new casino potentially could drive them out of the business, curtail investment and mean millions in lost revenue to the state from the racing industry and video gaming machines. A group submitted a letter with Cuomo's office Tuesday.

"The Indian Casino would result in the near-certain closure of the Monticello Racino, which is located 10 minutes from the proposed site, and take away higher-end and weekend customers from Yonkers, Resorts World New York and Saratoga Racinos," the letter says. "By our calculation, this will lessen the state tax revenues by hundreds of millions of dollars for the Education Fund and Lottery Administration."

Empire Resorts, owner of Monticello Gaming & Raceway, Saratoga Gaming & Raceway, Yonkers Raceway, Resorts World New York (which has broken ground in Queens on a racino at Aqueduct), the Fingerlakes Racing Association, and the Buffalo Trotting Association are represented in the letter, which was penned by James Featherstonhaugh, a principal of Saratoga Racing & Gaming.

Empire Resorts employs roughly 300 people in Monticello through a racino with video gaming machines and harness horse track. With the collapse of the New York City Off-Track Betting Association, the letter goes on to predict the possible collapse of the state's racing industry.

## Paterson's legacy

Gov. David Paterson, in one of his last acts, submitted to the Department of Interior a gaming compact and land settlement deal with the Wisconsin-based tribe that, if approved, would bring a casino with slots and table games to Bridgeville in the Town of Thompson.

Supporters of the casino were quick to defend the compact and settlement.

"To say it happened at the 11th hour at midnight is so untrue," Thompson Supervisor Tony Cellini said. "This has been going on for 10 years. " Personally, I think it is out of state hands."

Cuomo, as governor, has not mentioned the casino deal. Calls to his office for a comment weren't immediately returned. A spokeswoman for The Stockbridge-Munsees also couldn't immediately be reached.

## **Time limit**

Federal Department of Interior Officials have a 45-day window to approve or reject the compact, which basically outlines the terms of revenue sharing. If it takes no action within 45 days, the compact is binding. The clock began sometime around Jan. 5, sources say.

There are, however, other hurdles.

The Department of Interior and the Department of Justice are reviewing the land settlement deal. Here, the tribe is relying on an untested legal theory, settlement of a land claim without the approval of Congress.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar also must agree to take the land into trust for a casino. These reviews have no time limit. Government sources working closely with the tribe couldn't accurately predict how long the county will have to wait for an answer.

Aside from federal approvals, environmentalists and competing New York tribes, such as the Oneidas and Senecas, are expected to file lawsuits.

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## Racinos to Cuomo: Stop casino - Times Herald-Record

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 13 January 2011 02:25 -

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