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Schwartzkopf said his new bill would establish a five-member committee appointed by the governor that would evaluate and award casino proposals.

The panel would consist of a judge, a banker, a retired law-enforcement officer, the director of the Delaware Economic Development Office and the secretary

of finance, Schwartzkopf said.

Williams also has qualms with Markell appointing the selection committee. "I don't think the governor should have the entire say on where the casino goes," he said.

The legislation would not set a licensing fee, Schwartzkopf said. That would be voted on later, after casino proposals were approved by the selection committee, he said.

A licensing fee is treated as a tax bill, requiring 25 votes to clear the House and 13 to pass the Senate. But authorization to build two new casinos would require a simple majority of 21 House members and 11 senators.

DELAWARE: Legislators push for new casino - Delmarva Daily Times

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 18 January 2011 05:47 -

"I don't think whoever puts the most cash upfront should necessarily get the project," Schwartzkopf said. "That's where we're going to have to trust this committee to do what's best."

Unlike the established casinos, a horse or harness racing track would not be required.

But Schwartzkopf said the panel would be charged with selecting the casino plan that has the biggest economic impact, meaning projects with hotels, racetracks, concert venues or indoor water parks could get preference.

Markell, a Democrat, appears to be more publicly supportive of the casino legislation this year than during the last legislative session, when he stayed out of the fight.

"He thinks there needs to be a fair and competitive process around how those licenses might be awarded and expects that the legislation would include that kind of approach," Markell spokesman Brian Selander said.

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The state of Delaware taxes roughly 43.5 percent of all revenue from the casinos.

The tracks get about 41.4 percent of the revenues, with the remainder split up among horsemen and vendors.

Revenue has declined in recent years because of higher state taxes and the recession, said Bill Fasy, president of Delaware Park.

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