

Michigan's attorney general has thrown support behind an Indian tribe's legal bid to have a competing casino closed.

In a U.S. District Court motion filed Wednesday, Attorney General Bill Schuette said the Bay Mills Indian Community's Vanderbilt casino -- not on tribal land and

operating without government approval -- is costing the state money. By drawing customers away from casinos operating under state compacts, Bay Mills is reducing the payments coming to the state from other tribes, the motion said. "More important perhaps ... (Bay Mills is) violating state and federal anti-gambling laws. ... These state laws make it illegal for anyone to frequent an unlawful casino ... ," Schuette wrote. The casino is "enticing the public to violate the law" and is "creating a public nuisance."

Former Attorney General Mike Cox and the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa filed separate lawsuits in December aiming to have the Vanderbilt casino closed. Both lawsuits contend Bay Mills is violating state and federal laws. The Vanderbilt casino is 37 miles away from the Little Traverse Odawa Casino. Officials have said the Vanderbilt casino is a test for opening a larger facility off tribal land in Port Huron.

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