

Gaming Commission to consider Tier casino RFA Monday

Written by Administrator
Wednesday, 18 March 2015 20:06 -

Jon Harris, jharris@pressconnects.com | @PSBJonHarris 3:55 p.m. EDT March 18, 2015



Tioga Downs, in Nichols, is the only entity that has publicly expressed interest in submitting a new casino bid in the Southern Tier. (Photo: FILE PHOTO)

The Southern Tier's second chance for a casino is expected to start Monday.

The state Gaming Commission is scheduled to meet at noon Monday in Brooklyn. There, the commission will consider a new Request for Applications for the Southern Tier region.

On Feb. 27, the Gaming Facility Location Board voted to adopt a new RFA for the Southern Tier. If the Gaming Commission approves the RFA, it will be released online immediately after the meeting Monday.

On Dec. 17, the location board recommended three projects — Lago Resort & Casino in the Finger Lakes, Montreign Resort Casino in the Catskills, and Rivers Casino & Resort at Mohawk Harbor in the Capital region — for commercial casino licenses.

The Gaming Commission has yet to issue the final licenses.

In the L-shaped region that was dubbed the Eastern Southern Tier, Lago, a \$425 million project in Tyre, Seneca County, beat out Tioga Downs, a Nichols racino, and Traditions Resort &

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Casino, in the Town of Union.

According to the board's [785-page report](#) , Tioga Downs and Traditions both had concerning project designs and financing structures.

The exclusion of the Southern Tier the first time around outraged local politicians. And in a Dec. 26 letter, Gov. Andrew Cuomo urged the state Gaming Commission and the location board to issue a new RFA for a casino in the "true Southern Tier."

The location board, at its [meeting Jan. 13 in Manhattan](#) , directed staff to assemble the new RFA.

As of now, Tioga Downs is the only entity that has publicly expressed interest in submitting a new bid in the Southern Tier. Still, [Binghamton Mayor Richard David](#) has said he's had conversations with entities about the viability of a casino in the city.

While the board members have repeatedly made it clear they want a competition for the license in the Southern Tier, some maintain that the region is too small to support a racino and a Las Vegas-style casino. One bidder in the last round, Traditions at the Glen, now supports Tioga Downs.

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