

NY State Senate votes to share more casino profits with Madison County

Written by Administrator

Monday, 11 April 2016 16:41 -

SYRACUSE, N.Y. -- Madison County would get 25 percent of the Yellow Brick Road Casino slot machine profits that the Oneida Indian Nation pays to New York under a bill approved Tuesday by the state Senate.

Despite objections from neighboring Oneida County, senators voted 57 to 1 to share with Madison County a percentage of the slot machine profits the state receives from the casino in Chittenango and from two Oneida Indian gas stations.

Madison and Oneida County officials said they don't have an estimate of what the 25 percent share would equal.

The bill will now go to the state Assembly, which passed a similar bill last year but has to vote again on this issue.

The bill pits two Central New York counties against each other in a fight over the gambling revenue.

Sen. David Valesky, D-Oneida, whose district includes Madison County, sponsored the bill. Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-Rome, who represents most of Oneida County, was the only senator to vote against it.

Madison County is the only county that hosts a Native American casino in New York that does not receive a host community benefit, Valesky said in a news release.

"This is a basic issue of fairness," Valesky said. "With gaming comes increased wear on infrastructure and other county administrative responsibilities, such as emergency services. The state recognizes these burdens in the form of a host community benefit. Now that Madison County is a host community, it should receive the same benefits."

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Any payments to Madison County would come exclusively out of the state's share of gaming revenue generated in Madison County itself, he said.

A 2013 settlement with the Oneida Indian Nation of New York provided that the Oneidas would get a monopoly on casino gambling in a 10-county region in exchange for them sharing for the first time gambling revenue from Turning Stone Casino & Resort with the state and with the 10 counties.

Under the deal, Oneida County is getting the biggest share of the Oneida's annual payments to New York from its gambling revenue.

The Oneidas pay Madison County \$3.5 million a year and pay Oneida County \$2.5 million a year plus 25 percent of the estimated \$50 million to \$60 million the Oneidas pay to New York state from its slot machines profits. In 2015, the 25 percent payment to Oneida County equaled \$14 million.

After the Oneida Indian Nation opened the Yellow Brick Road Casino in 2015 in Madison County, Madison County asked the state for a percentage of the state's revenue from that facility.

[Oneida County objected](#) . Executive Anthony Picente sent a letter to Gov. Andrew Cuomo, state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie in March urging them to reject Valesky's bill.

Picente noted that the 2013 deal stipulates that any amendment to the agreement must be approved by all parties - including Oneida and Madison counties, the Oneida Indian Nation, and the state Legislature.

Contact Mike McAndrew anytime / [email](#) / [Twitter](#) / 315-470-3016

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