

## State blows first deadline in Chicago casino timeline: 'Working through the process'

Written by Administrator  
Thursday, 11 July 2019 15:50 -

---

Less than two weeks after Illinois' massive gambling expansion was signed into law by Gov. J.B. Pritzker, state officials have stumbled out of the starting gate in the race for a Chicago casino.

The Illinois Gaming Board was supposed to have selected a consultant to conduct a feasibility study on the city casino within 10 days of Pritzker [signing the bill](#) on June 28 — the law's first hard deadline that came and went Monday.

No consultant had been picked as of Thursday afternoon, and it wasn't clear how many had applied for the gig that pays up to \$101,800.

The failure to pick a consultant is no big surprise. The deadline the board set for applications was Tuesday afternoon — a day after the consultant was supposed to be actually chosen.

"We are working through the process, and the Illinois Gaming Board is bound by the procurement code and the law," gaming board spokesman Gene O'Shea said.

Pritzker shrugged off the delay while speaking to reporters Wednesday.

"Nothing is going to happen until [casino] licenses are issued, and that will happen in due course," he said. "We need to make sure that the study is underway for the city of Chicago. Remember, that's only one component of that gaming bill. It's an important one, no doubt about it. It's in process."

The board is seeking a "nationally recognized casino gaming feasibility consultant" to analyze the economy, demographics, tax structure, geography "and any other relevant factor of the Chicago Metropolitan Area," according to the bid description.

## State blows first deadline in Chicago casino timeline: 'Working through the process'

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 11 July 2019 15:50 -

---

The report is supposed to assess how much revenue a casino would churn out for the city and state, and whether certain locations would be more profitable than others — key elements of a debate that already has some Chicago aldermen [lobbying for the site](#) , and others trying to nip it in the bud. Mayor Lori Lightfoot has not tipped her hand on [a preferred location](#) .

The law gives the consultant 45 days to submit a report to the gaming board, but the agency has set an Aug. 12 deadline in the bid.

Once the report is submitted, the board has 90 days, or until mid-November, to recommend changes to the Chicago casino license terms. The city is also expected to chime in with requests for changes to the law in a potential trailer bill to be considered during the state's fall legislative session.

Before any of that, though, Pritzker still has to name a chairperson and another member to the five-person gaming board, which critics and insiders say is already understaffed as it oversees Illinois' 10 existing casinos and 31,000-plus video gaming machines — let alone the six new casinos in the pipeline along with the state's entirely new industry of [legal sports betting](#) .

"We'll be making announcements about the members and the chair of the gaming board as soon as we can," Pritzker said.

A Pritzker spokesperson added that that "administration will work as a partner with local communities and the board to support them in their efforts to create economic development across the state."

The expansion sets aside more money for the gaming board to bolster staff, but it was hiring for just two open positions on the state employment website as of Thursday.

Barring setbacks, casino gambling could open at a temporary Chicago site [in about a year](#) , supporters say. The gaming board says it can start accepting license applications from

## State blows first deadline in Chicago casino timeline: 'Working through the process'

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 11 July 2019 15:50 -

---

developers after the mid-November deadline.

The new law allows for 4,000 gaming positions at the Chicago casino, more than double most others in the state. The developer selected by the board would be on the hook for up to \$135 million in upfront licensing fees, with casino revenue split in thirds among the owner, city and state. Chicago's cut is earmarked for police and firefighter pension funds.

**Read more** <https://chicago.suntimes.com/city-hall/2019/7/11/20690775/chicago-casino-study-feasibility-deadline-passed-gambling-expansion>