

The New Jersey state Assembly, in a late vote Monday, approved a package of bills designed to reverse Atlantic City's economic fortunes and create a state-run tourist district in the Resort.

Other aspects of the bills allow for online gaming

through Atlantic City casinos — though restricted to state residents — revise casino regulations in the state, and boost racehorse breeding in the state.

All in all, four bills will be sent to Gov, Chris Christie for him to sign.

The bills do the following:

- Create a new tourist district in the city to be overseen by the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority. The district would include the city's Boardwalk, The Walk retail outlet stores and the city's Marina District. Atlantic City Mayor Lorenzo Langford and city officials have opposed the inclusion of the Marina District and undeveloped Bader Field area in the boundaries.
- Ends many regulations on state casinos and transfers many regulatory powers from the Casino Control Commission to the state Division of Gaming Enforcement.
- Allows for the regulation of online gaming through Atlantic City casinos.
- Continues a \$30 million casino subsidy to the horseracing industry through the Internet gambling plan. In the interim, CRDA would fund part of the subsidy.

Speaking in Atlantic City in July, creating a state-run tourism district and deregulating casinos were the centerpiece of revitalization plans for the city outlined by Christie. The governor, however, has opposed continued subsidies for horseracing.

Written by Administrator

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The bills saw a flurry of amendments and last minute changes as legislators sought to appease concerns from Atlantic City officials as well as supporters of the state's horseracing industry.

The amendments also ensure that Atlantic City police will handle the bulk of law enforcement duties in the tourism district in cooperation with a state police appointee to head policing in the district.

Another aspect of the bills creates a commission which, among other things, will study the feasibility of allowing casino gambling at The Meadowlands. Christie has opposed such plans in the past. That provision, however, needs approval by the Senate.

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