

Written by Administrator
Tuesday, 01 March 2011 18:42 -

Published: Tuesday, March 01, 2011, 7:31 PM **Updated: Tuesday, March 01, 2011, 7:31 PM**

BOSTON - Thirteen municipal leaders, including four from Western Massachusetts, on Tuesday launched an effort to jumpstart approval of [casinos](#) on Beacon Hill.

The leaders jointly sent a

letter to Gov. [Deval L. Patrick](#), House Speaker [Robert A. DeLeo](#) and Senate President Therese Murray, asking them to reach consensus on casinos.

Patrick, DeLeo and Murray met on Tuesday for a regular leadership meeting, but casinos did not come up as a topic, according to the governor.

"I will look forward to reading the letter, but as you know, that's not my top priority," Patrick said, referring to casinos.

Salem Mayor Kimberley Driscoll organized the letter. Driscoll is chairwoman of the [Massachusetts Coalition for Jobs and Growth](#), which includes mayors, businesses and labor groups.

"As the House and Senate prepare the budget this spring, we urge you to join together and reach consensus to enact expanded gaming legislation that will bring our Commonwealth sizable new tax revenues, significant new job creation, and new and significant tourism and hospitality growth," the letter said.

"The Commonwealth needs the jobs and revenues that expanded gaming will bring and needs it now. Our local communities, struggling with state aid cuts and declining local receipts, cannot afford to wait any longer."

Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino provided the lead signature. Western Massachusetts officials who signed included Paul E. Burns, a member of the Palmer Town Council; Chicopee Mayor [Michael D. Bissonnette](#), Holyoke Mayor [Elaine A. Pluta](#) and Easthampton Mayor Michael A. Tautznik.

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 01 March 2011 18:42 -

Patrick is calling for approval of a \$65 million cut, or 7 percent, in a major account of local aid for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

Also signing the letter: Revere Mayor Thomas G. Ambrosino, New Bedford Mayor Scott W. Lang, Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong, Melrose Mayor Robert J. Dolan, Gloucester Mayor Carolyn A. Kirk, Gardner Mayor Mark Hawke and Jay Ash, city manager in Chelsea.

In a phone interview, Burns said the letter is “a clear statement” that the state needs to resolve the issue of gambling.

“It’s a great step forward,” said Burns, who backs a casino for [Palmer](#). “It indicates broad support across the state.”

The [Mohegan Sun](#) of Connecticut is planning a casino off Exit 8 of the Massachusetts Turnpike in Palmer. The casino would create 2,500 to 3,000 permanent jobs to operate the casino and 1,200 to 1,500 construction jobs each year during up to two years of building, company officials said.

A group called [Paper City Development](#) wants to put a casino at the Wyckoff Country Club in Holyoke, which borders Interstate 91, if the state legalizes gaming.

Legislators approved a bill last year that included a casino resort for Western Massachusetts, but Patrick rejected the bill, saying it contained no-bid slot licenses for the state’s horse and former dog tracks. Patrick supported only one slot license for the tracks, but DeLeo insisted on two licenses.

DeLeo has said he is willing to compromise. Patrick has said casinos could be approved if he reaches agreement with the House speaker and Senate president before bringing any bill up for debate.

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 01 March 2011 18:42 -

[Powered By WizardRSS](#) - [Full Text RSS Feeds](#)

Source: http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&usg=AFQjCNGSignfds_OxPWbw2yQYcsu43Ydkw&url=http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2011/03/massachusetts_municipal_leaders_launch_effort_approval_casinos.html