

By TIM MARTIN

LANSING, Mich.

The opening of a casino in northern Michigan this week by the Bay Mills Indian Community is raising legal questions over where tribes are allowed to open new gaming locations.

Joy Yearout, a spokeswoman for Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox, said

state officials will meet with Bay Mills officials next week to discuss the new casino in Vanderbilt.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm's administration is "deeply concerned" about the casino opening, spokeswoman Liz Boyd said, in part because it isn't on the tribe's reservation.

"There are substantial questions about whether the tribe in fact can legally conduct gaming on this property," Boyd said in an e-mail to The Associated Press. "We are dismayed that the tribe would open an off-reservation gaming facility without first resolving these substantial legal issues."

Other Michigan-based tribes issued a statement this week saying the new casino, which has roughly 40 slot machines, should be shut down.

The tribes, some of which run casinos that would compete with the new site, say it's an attempt to conduct gaming in the absence of trust land in violation of federal law. The competing tribes said it also violates Michigan gaming compacts that require consent from all tribes to pursue gambling on non-reservation lands.

Bay Mills runs two casinos in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where the tribe is based. The Vanderbilt casino is in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula, about 170 miles north of

Lansing.

A report in the Bay Mills tribal newspaper says tribal members have been hunting elk in the Vanderbilt area since 2007, exercising off-reservation treaty rights. Bay Mills bought the land this summer.

Tribal leaders did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment Friday.

The other tribes that objected to the new casino were the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the Gun Lake Tribe of Pottawatomi Indians, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi Indians and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.

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