

VANDERBILT — One of the five Indian tribes contesting the legality of the Bay Mills Indian Community's casino, which opened in Vanderbilt last week, has informed the state it would discontinue making its 6 percent economic incentive payment it makes to Michigan.

Ken Harrington, tribal chairman of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, said the Vanderbilt casino violates the agreement in a compact between the Odawa Indian tribe and the state which provides for a competitive gaming area for the tribe.

"It (the compact) doesn't mean another tribe can't open a casino (in the gaming area)," Harrington said Tuesday. "It's not meant to exclude them, but they do have to comply with the proper procedures to open a casino. They (Bay Mills) haven't done that."

James Nye, spokesperson for the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians and four other tribes opposed to the Vanderbilt casino, said Tuesday he condones the Odawa tribe's decision to withhold its economic incentive payments.

"That was their decision and we support them. We continue to maintain it's an illegal casino and we will continue to do whatever needs to be done to shut it down," Nye said.

On Monday, Bay Mills council leaders were scheduled to meet with the Michigan Attorney General's office to discuss the issue of the Vanderbilt casino.

As of presstime neither the attorney general's office or Bay Mills had returned calls to confirm if a meeting had been held, although Nye said it was his understanding the two groups had met, but he had no information what was discussed or if any decisions had been made.

After the Bay Mills Resort & Casinos opened Nov. 3 on a 45-acre parcel of property it purchased in August from Treetops Resort on Old 27 North, just north of Vanderbilt, Harrington said he spoke to Jeff Parker, Bay Mills tribal chairman, "And he said, 'well Ken, the way we see it this is a legal casino.' I just told him we would have to agree to disagree."

## Vanderbilt casino status still in dispute by tribes - Petoskey News-Review

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The Bay Mills casino currently houses 36 slot machines, serves coffee, soft drinks and sandwiches in the 1,200-square-foot building which it recently renovated after it sat vacant for several years when Treetops Resort stopped using it as an information center.

Although leaders from the Bay Mills Indian Community had been in contact with village leaders off and on for the past 10 years expressing a desire to open a casino in Vanderbilt, village manager Elizabeth Haus said Tuesday the village council had not had any contact with the tribe prior to the opening of the casino last week.

“Don (Posgate, Vanderbilt Village president) didn’t know anything about it until he went up there Wednesday to check it out,” Haus said.

At Tuesday’s Otsego County Commissioner’s meeting, Haus addressed the casino issue, saying, “The village has absolutely nothing to do with the legal issues between the tribes. I would hope if Bay Mills is able to remain open, we will be able to wisely use any revenues we may receive. I know there are both good and bad things about a casino.”

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