

Is The Smoking Ban To Blame For A Decrease In Casino Revenue? - Chicagoist

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 13 November 2010 12:56 -

According to a new report from the Legislature's bipartisan Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability [via the Chicago Sun-Times](#) , gambling revenue in the last fiscal year totaled slightly more than \$1 billion, a 4.5 percent decrease from

last year and the lowest figures for legalized gambling in Illinois in the past 10 years.

Although the report blames the decrease "almost entirely" on the declining sales at the state's nine riverboat casinos, they also conclude with the fact that "The numbers continue to suggest that the biggest contributor to the drop in Illinois casino revenues is the indoor smoking ban." Gambling industry representatives also back up this claim, pointing out that receipts have decreased by 28 percent since the smoking ban took effect almost three years ago. "States around us still increased some. The economy around us is the same as ours. It had to be the smoking ban," Tom Swoik, executive director of the Illinois Casino Gaming Association, told the (Springfield) State Journal-Register.

However, Kathy Drea, of the American Lung Association of Illinois, still believes that the economy is to blame. She explained to the Sun-Times that riverboats were originally put in parts of the state that were economically depressed, therefore when the recession hit, their revenues immediately went down. "They are not destination vacation places," she said to the Sun-Times. Drea also pointed out that the Rock Island boat opened new gambling facilities in 2009 and did see an increase in revenue, even outperforming a boat in Davenport, Iowa, where smoking is not banned.

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