

10 bills aimed at reviving NJ casinos advance - Newsday

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 09 December 2010 20:34 -

- [Add comment](#)
- [Share](#)
-

[Email](#) [Print](#) [A a](#) [Share](#) [Tweet](#)

Originally published: December 9, 2010 6:24 PM

Updated: December 9, 2010 8:16 PM

By The Associated Press ANGELA DELLI SANTI (Associated Press)

TRENTON, N.J. - (AP) — The struggling casino and horse racing industries in New Jersey got a long look from state lawmakers Thursday, who advanced 10 bills aimed at enhancing [Atlantic City](#)'s future and cutting the tracks loose to survive without state aid.

The proposals closely follow recommendations of a task force named by Gov. Chris [Christie](#). The Hanson Commission recommended that the state focus scarce resources on Atlantic City, which has been hit hard by increased competition from out-of-state casinos and by the [recession](#).

The report recommended the state get out of the horse racing business. A \$30 million subsidy to fatten racing purses was recently allowed to lapse. Standardbred horsemen have been meeting with the governor's office trying to broker a deal that would save the season at the Meadowlands scheduled to begin next month.

"The casino and horse racing industries are two backbones of New Jersey," Assemblyman John Burzichelli said before the Assembly Regulatory and Oversight Committee hearing began. "They create jobs and spark economic development in many, many ways, and we must ensure they remain strong and competitive economic engines for generations to come."

The centerpiece legislation, which Burzichelli sponsored, establishes a new tourism district around Atlantic City's 11 casinos with tighter state control over planning, development and law enforcement within the district. The goal, Burzichelli said, is to cut through some of the red tape

10 bills aimed at reviving NJ casinos advance - Newsday

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 09 December 2010 20:34 -

that investors have long complained about, and to create a single oversight body to spur investment in Atlantic City and market the city's assets.

Another bill changes the regulatory structure in Atlantic City for the first time in 30 years, and is aimed at making the city more inviting to potential investors. Money saved in the regulatory overhaul would provide \$30 million to horse racing over three years. Lawmakers refer to that money as transitional aid, to help racing survive the transition to private ownership.

"What we're trying to do here is create a bridge to self-sufficiency for the horse racing industry, so valuable for job creation and revenues for the state," said Sen. Ray Lesniak, who is sponsoring a bill that also provides short-term aid to racing.

Lesniak's measure allows Atlantic City casinos to offer Internet wagering, which he estimated would bring up to \$250 million in annual revenue and create nearly 550 jobs. The bill would dedicate up to \$37 million a year to the horse racing industry for five years. The Senate has approved the legislation.

No action was taken on a bill to shorten the standardbred racing season.

On Wednesday, Christie vetoed plans for a full racing schedule at the horse tracks. The standardbred season at the Meadowlands remains in limbo.

The thoroughbred track at [Monmouth Park](#) in Oceanport ran on an abbreviated schedule last summer, but still ran about \$6.6 million in the red.

The commission recommended consolidating live standard- and thoroughbred racing at Monmouth Park and selling or leasing that track and an off-track betting facility in Woodbridge. The long-term plan calls for additional OTB licenses to be sold to private operators.

"The property at the Meadowlands Sports Complex is simply too valuable to be occupied by a

10 bills aimed at reviving NJ casinos advance - Newsday

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 09 December 2010 20:34 -

money-losing business," Jon Hanson wrote. "This plan allows for both breeds of racing to continue while allowing the State to pursue the maximum return from the value of public assets including Monmouth Park and the Meadowlands."

Copyright 2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Rate this:

(Click to rate)

[Powered by WizardRSS](#) | [Best Membership Site Software](#)

Source: http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&usg=AFQjCNG_HvumlhYtRn9B5rx4Rb6lVJC38w&url=http://www.newsday.com/news/region-state/10-bills-aimed-at-reviving-nj-casinos-advance-1.2530929