

HCS HB 2420 -- EXCURSION GAMBLING BOATS

SPONSOR: Jones, 89 (Baker, 123)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on General Laws by a vote of 5 to 1.

This substitute prohibits the Missouri Gaming Commission from issuing any new license to operate excursion gambling boats prior to August 28, 2011. Any license issued to replace an expired, forfeited, or revoked license must be issued to the same excursion gambling boat or another boat located in the same or adjoining city or county as the boat whose license is being replaced.

Any future licenses for which the commission received an application and selected the application as a priority to be investigated to determine suitability for a license prior to December 31, 2007, will be considered as a license issued prior to August 28, 2008.

The Executive Director of the Missouri Gaming Commission is allowed to levy an appropriate administrative penalty against a holder of any gaming license who violates the provisions of Chapter 313, RSMo, including, but not limited to, a monetary penalty and suspension or revocation of a license. The executive director must report any administrative penalties to the commission on a regular basis.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on General Revenue Fund in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011. Estimated Cost on Other State Funds of \$0 to Unknown in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill creates a moratorium on new casino boat licenses. In Missouri, there is no outcry for more casinos as Missourians have shown at the polls in municipal elections in Jefferson City and Branson. The gaming industry in Missouri is a mature market as shown by the commission's own study.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Baker (123); Casino Watch; Missouri Family Network; and Cathy Bordner.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that gaming in Missouri is a constantly changing environment. The commission needs the ability to license casinos in order to remain flexible and deal with the many local markets. The commission should be allowed to deal with each application by each casino on a case-by-case basis without any limitation on licenses. One issue with the Missouri gaming market is that the 13 licenses are not owned by 13

different entities. In reality, there are about five owners of those 13 licenses; and by limiting the licenses, a monopoly in the gaming industry in Missouri will be created.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri Gaming Commission; and Wild Rose Entertainment.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that casinos applying for licenses prior to the effective date of the bill and that are being considered currently for licenses should be exempt from the provisions of the bill. There is currently a casino that has invested millions of dollars based on the presumption that they will be able to apply for and be issued a license.

Testifying on the bill was Pinnacle Entertainment, Incorporated.