

## Casino industry says Illinois hurting riverboats with taxes

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CHICAGO (AP) - A group representing **Illinois casino** owners outlined a proposal Tuesday that they claim could help plug the budget hole by raising an additional \$317 million in tax revenue.

Tom Swoik, executive director of the **Illinois Casino** Gaming Association, told **Illinois** Gaming Board officials a recent tax increase on **casino** profits and restrictions on the number of gamblers allowed into riverboats are hurting the industry and, subsequently, reducing the amount of tax money generated.

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At the board's monthly meeting, he said casinos in neighboring states are seeing an increase in revenues.

"The amount of money that is supposed to be brought in by the tax isn't there because we are losing market share," Swoik said after the meeting.

An estimated \$317 million in tax revenue could be raised through cutting the maximum tax on **casino** profits from 50 percent to 35 percent, eliminating the restrictions on riverboat capacity and issuing a 10th riverboat **casino** license, Swoik said.

"We could generate more money for the state than what is currently being generated," he said.

Meanwhile, city officials from north suburban Waukegan announced Tuesday they will compete for the state's last available **casino** license. Other cities seeking the license include Des Plaines and Calumet City. The **casino** originally was set to be in Rosemont, but it was blocked from opening because of alleged mob ties.