

**Senate File 173 - Introduced**

SENATE FILE 173  
BY COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(SUCCESSOR TO SSB 1069)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act concerning the licensing and regulation of gambling games,  
2 including a moratorium on the issuance of new licenses,  
3 and including effective date and retroactive applicability  
4 provisions.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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1 Section 1. Section 99F.4, subsection 24, Code 2025, is  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 24. a. To conduct a socioeconomic study on the impact of  
4 gambling on Iowans, every eight years beginning in calendar year  
5 2013, and issue a report on that study. The commission shall  
6 ensure that the results of each study are readily accessible to  
7 the public.

8 b. The report on the study must include all of the following:

9 (1) Information on the financial and societal impact of  
10 gambling.

11 (2) An analysis of problem gambling and treatment programs.

12 (3) An evaluation of existing excursion gambling boats,  
13 gambling structures, and pari-mutuel racetracks located in rural  
14 areas or near the state border, if a new license is awarded.

15 (4) A comprehensive assessment of potential gambling market  
16 conditions.

17 (5) An evaluation of the effects on the gambling market from  
18 competitive gambling locations located within sixty miles of the  
19 state.

20 (6) An evaluation of the effects on attracting out-of-state  
21 tourists to existing excursion gambling boats, gambling  
22 structures, and pari-mutuel racetracks located near the state  
23 border.

24 (7) An evaluation of the effects on existing qualified  
25 sponsoring organizations and potential reductions in annual  
26 distributions made by the sponsoring organization, if a new  
27 license is awarded.

28 (8) The percentage ownership of existing gambling boats,  
29 gambling structures, and pari-mutuel racetracks by residents of  
30 this state versus any applicant.

31 (9) A comprehensive study of new potential adjusted gross  
32 receipts after awarding a new license and the level of gambling  
33 saturation with a sixty-mile radius of any existing excursion  
34 gambling boat, gambling structure, or racetrack enclosure.

35 (10) Criminal statistics near existing excursion gambling

1 boats, gambling structures, or racetrack enclosures, and near  
2 any potential locations of an excursion gambling boat, gambling  
3 structure, or racetrack enclosure.

4 (11) An analysis of the impact on community services,  
5 including public safety expenditures, fire protection,  
6 infrastructure improvements, and other capital project  
7 expenditures in counties.

8 **Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. 99F.5A Limitations on issuance of**  
9 **licenses to conduct gambling games.**

10 1. a. Commencing January 1, 2025, through June 30, 2030, the  
11 total number of licenses issued by the commission to conduct  
12 gambling games on an excursion gambling boat, at a gambling  
13 structure, or at a pari-mutuel racetrack shall not exceed  
14 nineteen subject to the requirements of this subsection.

15 b. Licenses to conduct gambling games shall be restricted  
16 to those counties where an excursion gambling boat, gambling  
17 structure, or racetrack enclosure was operating and licensed to  
18 conduct gambling games on January 1, 2025.

19 c. The commission shall be authorized to take any of the  
20 following actions concerning the issuance of licenses to conduct  
21 gambling games:

22 (1) A gambling games licensee may move to a new location  
23 within the same county and retain the gambling games license.

24 (2) A licensed facility may be sold and a new gambling games  
25 license issued for operation in the same county.

26 (3) If a license to conduct gambling games is surrendered,  
27 not renewed, or revoked, a new gambling games license may be  
28 issued for operation in the same county.

29 2. On or after July 1, 2030, the commission shall not issue  
30 a new license until after the commission has issued the required  
31 report on the socioeconomic study on the impact of gambling on  
32 Iowans due for calendar year 2029 in accordance with section  
33 99F.4, subsection 24.

34 3. This section is repealed July 1, 2031.

35 Sec. 3. Section 99F.6, subsection 5, Code 2025, is amended to

1 read as follows:

2 5. Before a license is granted, an operator of an excursion  
3 gambling boat shall work with the economic development authority  
4 to promote tourism throughout Iowa and encourage tourism from  
5 other states. Tourism information from local civic and private  
6 persons may be submitted for dissemination. The commission shall  
7 not issue a new license for a new location that would negatively  
8 impact an existing licensee located in a county contiguous to  
9 the Iowa border or located in a county that qualifies as a  
10 rural county. For purposes of this subsection, "rural county"  
11 means a county with a population of less than thirty thousand as  
12 determined by the most recent population estimate produced by the  
13 United States bureau of the census or the most recent decennial  
14 census released by the United States bureau of the census.

15 Sec. 4. Section 99F.6, Code 2025, is amended by adding the  
16 following new subsection:

17 NEW SUBSECTION. 10. a. The commission shall not issue a new  
18 license to conduct gambling games if the commission finds the  
19 approval of a new license would cause or do any of the following:

20 (1) Negatively impact the adjusted gross receipts of an  
21 existing excursion gambling boat, gambling structure, or  
22 racetrack enclosure by more than ten percent.

23 (2) Negatively impact the annual distributions of an existing  
24 qualified sponsoring organization.

25 b. If the commission does not issue a new license to conduct  
26 gambling games in a county, another application shall not be  
27 submitted for that county for eight years from the date of the  
28 decision not to issue the license.

29 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act, being deemed of immediate  
30 importance, takes effect upon enactment.

31 Sec. 6. RETROACTIVE APPLICABILITY. This Act applies  
32 retroactively to January 1, 2025.

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EXPLANATION

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The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with

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the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

1 This bill concerns the licensing and regulation of gambling  
2 games. Under current law, the state racing and gaming commission  
3 (commission) is required to conduct a socioeconomic study on  
4 the impact of gambling on Iowans every eight years. The bill  
5 identifies certain topics the commission must examine for this  
6 socioeconomic study, and prohibits the commission from issuing a  
7 new license on or after July 1, 2030, until the required report  
8 on the socioeconomic study has been issued by the commission for  
9 2029.

10 The bill places a moratorium on the issuance of new licenses  
11 to conduct gambling games in excess of 19 licenses from January  
12 1, 2025, through June 30, 2030. The bill restricts gambling  
13 games licenses to those counties conducting gambling games on  
14 January 1, 2025. The bill allows the commission to authorize  
15 a gambling games licensee to move to a new location within the  
16 same county, to issue a gambling games license in a county if  
17 a licensed facility in that county is sold, and to issue a new  
18 license in a county if a previous license to conduct gambling  
19 games in that county was surrendered, not renewed, or revoked.

20 Before a license is granted, the bill requires an operator of  
21 an excursion gambling boat to work with the economic development  
22 authority to encourage tourism from other states. The bill  
23 prohibits the commission from issuing a new gambling games  
24 license to an excursion gambling boat if the new license would  
25 impact an existing licensee located in a county contiguous to the  
26 Iowa border or a "rural county" (a county with a population less  
27 than 30,000).

28 The bill prohibits the commission from issuing a new gambling  
29 games license if the new license would negatively impact the  
30 adjusted gross receipts of an existing gambling games licensee  
31 by more than 10 percent, or negatively impact the annual  
32 distributions of an existing qualified sponsoring organization.  
33 If the commission does not issue a gambling games license in  
34 a county, another applicant cannot apply for a license in the  
35 same county for eight years from the date of the decision not to

1 issue.

2 The bill takes effect upon enactment and applies retroactively  
3 to January 1, 2025.

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