

Md. picks MGM for new casino near nation's capital

Written by Administrator

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BALTIMORE (AP) -- MGM Resorts International won a license for a new casino near the nation's capital in Maryland on Friday.

A state commission voted 5-2 in favor of Las Vegas-based MGM's proposal to build a \$925 million resort near the Potomac River at National Harbor with a 300-suite hotel, casino and seven restaurants. The casino plan includes 3,600 slot machines and 140 table games such as blackjack and roulette.

"I want to build the most beautiful, iconic and successful resort," said Jim Murren, CEO of MGM Resorts International. "I think outside of Las Vegas, this will be the most profitable commercial resort in the United States, and I want to bring that here."

Murren said the resort will create 2,000 construction jobs and 4,000 permanent jobs.

Maryland voters approved a casino in the county last year after lawmakers agreed to expand gambling in a special session.

The license is the sixth granted in five years in Maryland and four casinos have already opened. This casino could not open until July 2016, or 30 months after a casino being built in Baltimore opens.

Penn National, based in Wyomissing, Pa., had proposed a \$700 million casino at the company's Rosecroft Raceway in Prince George's County, about 13 miles from Washington. The Hollywood Casino Resort at Rosecroft Raceway would have included slot machines, live table games and a poker room. The plan also includes a hotel with a pool and spa and a multipurpose event center. Rosecroft also would have featured horse racing.

Maryland Casino LLC, a subsidiary of Greenwood Racing, proposed the \$800 million Parx Casino Hotel & Spa on a 22-acre parcel in Fort Washington with a hotel and entertainment venue. Greenwood Racing owns and operates Pennsylvania's highest revenue-generating

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casino, Parx Casino.

Commissioners expressed concern about economic projections by consultants for Penn National and had questions about transportation infrastructure near the proposed Parx casino. Commissioners also noted that they were pleased with the casino design proposed by MGM. They said MGM also stood better to draw customers because of their casinos in other parts of the country, like Las Vegas.

Don Fry, the commission chairman, said he thought the amenities at MGM were stronger. He also said he believed it would be a destination resort.

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