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Title: New York court rules casino compacts invalid

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Article Text:

A ruling on Thursday by the New York State Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, deemed the compact allowing an existing Indian casino to operate in northern New York State is invalid, but does not appear to affect the installation of video lottery terminals at the state's racetracks, including Aqueduct and Finger Lakes.

In a ruling on a suit brought by the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, the Christian group New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms Ltd., other anti-gambling groups, and a group of state legislators, the court ruled that former Governor Mario Cuomo did not have the authority to sign a compact with the St. Regis Mohawks in 1993 to open a casino on its Akwesasne reservation without approval by the New York Legislature. The ruling also invalidates an extension of that deal made by Governor George Pataki with the Mohawks in 1999.

The same group of plaintiffs has a separate suit alleging that six new Indian casinos proposed by Pataki in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls and Catskill Mountains regions, as well as the planned installation and operation of VLTs at the state's racetracks, is unconstitutional.

The New York Racing Association is hoping to begin operating VLTs at Aqueduct by January 1, 2004.

Courtesy of www.casinoman.net

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