

Gov. Evers: Announces concurrence with Department of Interior's decision regarding Ho-Chunk Nation's Beloit casino proposal

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers announced today that he concurs with the United States Department of Interior's decision that 32 acres of land in Beloit should be taken into trust by the federal government for the purpose of developing a new Ho-Chunk Nation casino. As described in the Ho-Chunk Nation's submissions to the Department of Interior, the Beloit project would create more than 1,500 long-term jobs in the casino-resort complex and more than 2,000 construction jobs.

"As we work to bounce back from this pandemic, we must do everything we can to support economic development in communities across our state," said Gov. Evers. "The Ho-Chunk Nation and local officials in Beloit and Rock County have been working together toward providing jobs and long-term economic support in the region, and this is an important step forward in making the Beloit casino a reality."

By announcing his concurrence, Gov. Evers agreed with the Secretary of Interior's April 2020 determination that taking the land into trust for the purpose of gaming would be in the best interest of the Ho-Chunk Nation and would not be detrimental to the surrounding community. The proposal now moves on to the next stages of the approval process. The Department of Interior must issue its final determination on whether to take the land into trust, and the Governor and the Ho-Chunk Nation must complete an amendment to the Nation's gaming compact to address the new Beloit casino and related issues.

“We are incredibly excited to have this great news of the Governor’s concurrence today,” said Ho-Chunk Nation Vice President Karena Thundercloud. “We also want to thank the City of Beloit, Rock County, and our respective communities for all the support over the past several years. We look forward to the day when we can celebrate everybody who is helping this project along.”

“Not only will the Ho-Chunk Nation bring economic development, job growth and entertainment to our community, but the Nation will also provide cultural and historical education to our residents,” said Beloit City Manager Lori Curtis Luther. “We look forward to welcoming the Ho-Chunk Nation back to their home.”

The complex would include one of the largest casinos in the state, a 300-room hotel with more than 45,000 square feet of meeting and convention space, and an approximately 40,000 square foot indoor waterpark. The Nation also plans to develop additional entertainment or retail businesses on an adjacent property. The complex would be located just north of the Illinois border and immediately west of I-39/90.

“As our community strives to recover from the impact of COVID-19, we are thankful that carefully planned projects like this can continue to move forward,” said Beloit City Council President Regina Dunkin. “An entertainment destination of this magnitude is a win for the entire Greater Beloit region and will provide job opportunities for our residents. We sincerely thank Governor Evers for his careful review and approval of this project.”