

HB 1531-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2652

08/09

HOUSE BILL

1531-FN

AN ACT requiring applicants for games of chance facilities licensees and game operator employer licensees to enter into host community agreements with municipalities.

SPONSORS: Rep. Ohm, Hills. 10; Rep. Almy, Graf. 17; Rep. Telerski, Hills. 11; Rep. Juris, Hills. 7; Rep. Elberger, Hills. 5; Rep. Kuttub, Rock. 17; Rep. Scully, Hills. 8; Rep. Oppel, Graf. 9; Rep. Turcotte, Straf. 4; Rep. B. Boyd, Hills. 12; Sen. Rosenwald, Dist 13

COMMITTEE: Municipal and County Government

ANALYSIS

 This bill requires applicants for games of chance facility licenses and game operator employer licenses to enter into host community agreements with the municipalities in which they will operate games of chance.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
 Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
 Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT requiring applicants for games of chance facilities licensees and game operator employer licensees to enter into host community agreements with municipalities.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Statement of Purpose. The general court recognizes that charitable gaming establishments
2 have a disproportionate impact on the municipalities in which they are located and that it is in the
3 public interest for the operators of these establishments to mitigate strain on municipal resources
4 and infrastructure. Therefore, charitable gaming establishments should be required to enter into
5 host community agreements with host municipalities to address these impacts.

6 2 New Section; Host Community Agreement Required. Amend RSA 287-D by inserting after
7 section 4-a the following new section:

8 287-D:4-b Host Community Agreement Required.

9 I. In this section:

10 (a) "Applicant" means an applicant for a facilities license or a game operator employer
11 license under this chapter, whether for initial licensure or any license renewal.

12 (b) "Host community" means a municipality, including a city, town, or unincorporated
13 place, where an applicant for a game operator employer license or a facilities license is located or
14 proposes to locate to conduct any game of chance. If an applicant for a game operator employer
15 license or a facilities license is situated or proposes to be situated in 2 or more municipalities, each
16 shall be a host community for purposes of this section.

17 II. Before applying to the commission for licensure for initial licensure or any license
18 renewal, an applicant shall negotiate a host community agreement with the selectboard, aldermen,
19 city council, or county delegation of a host community. A host community agreement shall be
20 negotiated in good faith and shall address the reasonably foreseeable impacts of a charitable gaming
21 operation on the host community, providing terms by which the applicant will avoid, minimize, and
22 mitigate such impacts. At a minimum, the host community agreement shall accommodate any and
23 all needs of the host community that may foreseeably arise or increase because of a charitable
24 gaming operation, such as included in the following non-exhaustive list:

25 (a) Inquiries or complaints from the public and the host community's ability and
26 capacity to respond promptly;

27 (b) The host community's emergency response capacity;

28 (c) The host community's infrastructure, including but not limited to roads and utilities;

29 (d) The provision of security to support local law enforcement;

30 (e) The exchange of information between the applicant and the host community;

1 (f) Promoting the hiring of residents, suppliers, and vendors from the host community;
2 and

3 (g) Any other matters at the discretion of the host community.

4 III. Prior to execution, the selectboard, aldermen, city council, or county delegation, as
5 applicable, shall provide notice of the host community agreement in at least 2 public places in the
6 host community, on the website of the host community, and by publication in a newspaper of general
7 circulation. The notice shall include a fair, concise summary of the host community agreement,
8 identify where the full host community agreement will be available for inspection, and explain the
9 method and deadline by which the public may submit comments related to the host community
10 agreement. Contemporaneously with the publication of such notice, a copy of the host community
11 agreement shall be made available for public inspection on the host community's website and at
12 least 2 public places within the host community. The public shall have 14 days following the date
13 notice is published to submit comments. In its discretion, the selectboard, alderman, city council, or
14 county delegation, as applicable, may hold a public hearing on the host community agreement to
15 receive public comment. Notice of the hearing shall be posted in at least 2 public places in the host
16 community, on the website of the host community, and by publication in a newspaper of general
17 circulation at least 14 days before the hearing. Upon conclusion of the public comment period, the
18 selectboard, aldermen, city council, or county delegation, as applicable, may renegotiate the host
19 community agreement with the applicant based on comments received from the public or execute the
20 host community agreement, in its discretion. If renegotiated, the host community agreement shall
21 be subject to the notice and comment period under this paragraph.

22 IV. A copy of the executed host community agreement shall be submitted to the commission
23 with the applicant's initial license and renewal applications. No applicant shall be eligible for any
24 license unless it has executed a host community agreement and provided a copy of said agreement to
25 the commission.

26 V. A game operator employer licensee or facilities licensee with an active, unexpired license
27 in good standing as of the effective date of this section shall be exempt from the requirements of this
28 section until such time as the license expires and the licensee seeks renewal.

29 VI. The provisions of this section in no way abrogate an applicant's obligation to secure any
30 and all necessary local approvals from the host community. An applicant and a host community
31 shall not eliminate, lessen, or otherwise modify any local approval requirements via a host
32 community agreement.

33 VII. The requirements of this section are in addition to the licensing requirements for a
34 game operator employer or facility under this chapter. This section in no way abrogates any
35 licensing requirements contained in this chapter, and no host community agreement may eliminate,
36 lessen, or otherwise modify an applicant's licensing requirements under this chapter.

1 VIII. If an applicant fails to comply with the terms of an executed host community
2 agreement, the host community shall notify the commission, which shall investigate the host
3 community's claims of breach. If the commission determines that an applicant has breached a host
4 community agreement, it may pursue the penalties provided for in RSA 287-D:23, including
5 suspension or revocation of the applicant's license.

6 IX. The lottery commission shall adopt rules under RSA 541-A to implement this section
7 within one year of its effective date.

8 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

**HB 1531-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT requiring applicants for games of chance facilities licensees and game operator employer licensees to enter into host community agreements with municipalities.

FISCAL IMPACT: This bill does not provide funding, nor does it authorize new positions.

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenue	\$0	Indeterminable		
Revenue Fund(s)	General Fund and Lottery Fund/Education Trust Fund - Lottery revenue is credited to the lottery fund, with net revenues after expenditures being credited to the state education trust fund.			
Expenditures*	\$0	\$107,000	\$112,000	\$118,000
Funding Source(s)	Lottery Fund/Education Trust Fund - Lottery revenue is credited to the lottery fund, with net revenues after expenditures being credited to the state education trust fund.			
Appropriations*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Funding Source(s)	None			

***Expenditure = Cost of bill**

***Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill**

Estimated Political Subdivision Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Local Revenue	\$0	Indeterminable		
Local Expenditures	\$0	Indeterminable		

METHODOLOGY:

This bill requires future and current game operators and facility owners to negotiate agreements with the municipality where the gaming facility is located prior to operating a game room and every three (3) years prior to license renewal. These agreements would address foreseeable impacts of charitable gaming operations on the host community and provide terms by which the game operator and facility owners would avoid, minimize and mitigate such impacts. This bill also requires municipalities to notify the Lottery Commission in the event the game operator and/or the facility owners failed to abide by the agreement, and the Commission to investigate the complaint, determine if a breach of the agreement occurred, and issue penalties as appropriate.

The Commission states that currently there are 14 licensed game rooms operating across New Hampshire. Under this bill, both the game operator and facility owners of each room would be required to enter into agreements with their respective municipality as a condition for license renewal. Municipalities must publicly post the agreement and allow a 14-day public comment period. If public feedback prompts renegotiation, a revised agreement must be posted for an additional 14-day comment period. The Commission would be prohibited from renewing a gaming license until a finalized agreement is in place. However, this bill does not specify time limits for negotiations or renegotiations. As a result, the Commission anticipates that licenses could expire before agreements are reached, potentially leading to closures of game rooms for unknown periods of time and losses in gaming revenue. For illustrative purposes, the Commission states that a one-month delay in the license renewal for The Nash (based on September 2025 revenue data) would result in a loss of over \$1.2M in state revenue. This estimate does not account for longer-term impacts, such as reduced player retention rates following closure of a room.

To investigate potential contract disputes, the Commission expects to hire an attorney position (SOC 23-06, step 5) with a total anticipated cost of \$107,000 in FY 2027, \$112,000 in FY 2028, and \$118,000 in FY 2029. This bill provides neither authorization nor appropriation for new personnel.

The New Hampshire Municipal Association states a municipality may incur additional legal expenses related to negotiating a host community agreement (HCA); however, these costs may be offset in the long term by the agreed-upon terms of the HCA, which may reduce municipal expenditures or keep them cost-neutral in regard to any impacts associated with hosting a charitable gaming establishment. Because of the multiple variables that go into an HCA, the Association is unable to determine the potential impact on local revenue in municipalities that host charitable gaming establishments.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Lottery Commission and New Hampshire Municipal Association