
DIGEST

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HB 497 Original

2021 Regular Session

DuBuisson

Abstract: Provides for referendum elections necessary to authorize and conduct riverboat gaming operations in St. Tammany Parish.

Present law provides that the conducting of gaming activities on a riverboat is authorized only upon certain rivers or waterways designated by law. Present law provides that such designated rivers and waterways shall include those portions of the Mississippi, Red, except the portion of the Red River within the borders of Rapides Parish, Calcasieu, Mermentau, or Atchafalaya Rivers and Bayou Segnette within the city limits of Westwego, the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, Bayou Bienvenue, Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Maurepas, Lake Charles, the Intracoastal Waterway, except the portion thereof within the borders of Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, and the Sabine River north of the Toledo Bend Reservoir Dam.

Present law authorizes the governing authority of any parish which borders the proposed river's or waterway's banks to order, by resolution, an election to permit voters in such parish to decide the question of whether the berthing of a riverboat upon which gaming is conducted on such river or waterway shall be authorized.

Present law prohibits riverboat gaming activities from being conducted upon a riverboat berthed or docked at a facility on that portion of Lake Pontchartrain or any waterway connected thereto located within St. Tammany Parish.

Present law authorizes the governing authority of the parish or municipality in which the licensed berth of a riverboat is located to levy an admission fee of up to \$2.50 for each passenger boarding or embarking upon the riverboat.

Proposed law provides for the following:

- (1) Provides that the governing authority of St. Tammany Parish, by resolution, may call a referendum election to consider the following propositions:
 - (a) Whether to allow gaming operations and activities allowed under the La. Riverboat Economic Development and Gaming Control Act to be conducted in St. Tammany Parish as required by present constitution (La. Const. Art. XII, §6(C)(1)(b)).
 - (b) Whether a licensee approved by the La. Gaming Control Board shall be allowed to conduct gaming operations and activities allowed under the La. Riverboat Economic

Development and Gaming Control Act at a berth or docking facility located along the portions of Lake Pontchartrain that are part of the Lakeshore Marina located south and east of Interstate 10, Exit 261 in eastern St. Tammany Parish.

- (2) If these propositions are approved, then a riverboat gaming licensee desiring to conduct riverboat gaming operations or activities at the specified berth or docking facility in St. Tammany Parish on the approved portion of Lake Pontchartrain shall apply to the La. Gaming Control Board for authorization to conduct riverboat gaming operations or activities at that berth or docking facility, subject to the outcome of another referendum election.
- (3) If the La. Gaming Control Board authorizes one or more riverboat gaming licensees pursuant to the provisions of proposed law, the governing authority of St. Tammany Parish, by resolution, shall call a referendum election to consider a proposition on whether a specified riverboat gaming licensee shall be allowed to conduct riverboat gaming operations or activities at a specified berth or docking facility in St. Tammany Parish, as required by present constitution (La. Const. Art. XII, §6(C)(2)).
- (4) Except as otherwise provided by proposed law, all elections provided for by the provisions of proposed law shall be conducted as provided in the present law election code including but not limited to those provisions providing for the responsibility of the parish governing authority to provide notice to the public as provided by law.
- (5) Provides that the elections shall be held in St. Tammany Parish on an appropriate date as specified in the election code, to be selected by the governing authority of St. Tammany Parish.
- (6) Provides that if the elections authorized by the provisions of proposed law are held and if the propositions are approved by a majority of the electors voting thereon, then in lieu of the admission fee authorized by present law (R.S. 27:93(A)), the governing authority of the location of the berthing facility may levy a fee not to exceed five percent of the monthly net gaming proceeds from each riverboat located within the jurisdiction of the governing authority. Requires the monthly fee to be established by a "Community Agreement" between the St. Tammany Parish Development District and the riverboat licensee.
- (7) Repeals the present law provision that prohibits riverboat gaming activities from being conducted upon a riverboat berthed or docked at a facility on that portion of Lake Pontchartrain or any waterway connected thereto located within St. Tammany Parish.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 18:1300.25 and 1300.26 and R.S. 27:93(A)(12); Repeals R.S. 18:1300.21(I))