



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

## Senator Grisanti to increase state payment for video lottery locations to 2008-2009 levels to aid local governments

MARK GRISANTI June 29, 2012

| ISSUE: **FINANCE**



Senator Mark Grisanti (R-Buffalo) today announced at a Press Conference a bill in the Senate to return the funding levels for municipalities in which video lottery gaming facilities operate to the levels from the fiscal year 2008-2009. Over the past four budget cycles, the amount of money returned to the local governments that contain video lottery operations was cut by almost 60 percent. In the seven regions across New York State where there are nine racetrack casinos, the fiscal strain placed on budgets has resulted in cutbacks or tax

increases to cover the short fall.

“Western New York supports the efforts of the area racetrack casinos to return profits earned locally to those municipal governments that work to support these businesses. The Buffalo Raceway at the Hamburg Fairgrounds not only produces quality racing and gaming, but also provides solid jobs with decent wages. The state needs to recognize the contributions made by these entities to the community and allow the funds generated locally to stay local,” said Senator Mark Grisanti (R-60). “This is another example of Albany seeing a pot of money upstate that it can steal for other uses. We hope these bills will pass to return the over \$1.2 million to the Hamburg area that was stolen in the 2008 budget process.”

“We are very encouraged by the introduction of this bill by Senator Grisanti. We are hopeful this bill will pass immediately and the Town of Hamburg will have the revenue returned to it, which was taken by Albany,” said Steven J. Walters, Supervisor, Town of Hamburg.

“These latest efforts by Senator Grisanti highlight the unfair treatment of Hamburg and Western New York in the amount of funds received from video lottery terminals as it compares to other regions of our state. Last year, I wrote to Governor Cuomo urging him to reconsider plans that cut aid in Hamburg, outlining that cuts would be counterproductive and hinder the success of this revenue generating industry. Approval of the proposed legislation will significantly benefit Hamburg and return the aid to a fair and appropriate level,” said Erie County Legislator Lynne Dixon.

In Buffalo, the Hamburg Casino at the Fairgrounds, also known as the Buffalo Raceway, would receive \$1,236,683 as opposed to the \$557,000 it presently receives. Erie County will also receive \$412,228 over the \$186,000 it has received since the change in 2008.

Under this new legislation, the state finance law would be amended under Senate Bill S. 7479 to return the aid to localities payments for eligible municipalities in which video lottery gaming facilities are located to the 2008-2009 state fiscal year levels and amend the law in relation to payments of aid to eligible municipalities in which video lottery gaming facilities are located. The bill would increase local government assistance in the general fund by \$7,634,654.

A recent report done by the New York Gaming Association says the nine racetrack casinos in the state generate almost \$2 billion in economic output with \$830.5 million earmarked for state government. The nine racetracks account for 17,400 jobs with wages and salaries totaling more than \$855 million.