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New Jersey Lottery to Begin Online Sales, Lawmaker Calls Decision 'Disastrous'

By Tapinto Staff, August 17, 2023

TRENTON, NJ — The New Jersey Lottery Commission is moving forward with a plan to sell lottery tickets online.

The decision, which was made during a meeting Thursday, applies to games like Powerball, Mega Millions and Jersey Cash 5. It does not include scratch-offs.

"The Lottery has been carefully considering this proposal for several years," The New Jersey Lottery said in a statement. "We looked at the experiences that other lotteries have had launching online games and saw sales of all lottery products grow at brick and mortar retailers."

A lottery spokesperson tells TAPinto the new sales are expected to begin in the fall of 2024.

The Lottery has been looking at this idea for several years as part of an effort to attract new lottery players, who are primarily under the age of 40. Those players, according to the Lottery, "are essential to the long-term viability and success."

Sen. Vin Gopal (D - District 11) says it's a bad idea.

"After telling me directly that they would delay this vote to have more stakeholder input, the New Jersey Lottery Commission has chosen to ignore significant stakeholder concerns and move ahead with a proposal that will devastate countless small businesses in the state," Gopal said in a statement.

Gopal says the business owners will not just lose out on lottery sales. With customers potentially buying a ticket online, and not going into a store, Gopal says, business owners won't be able to sell other items to those customers.

"This decision will only serve to take sales away from New Jersey small businesses without providing them with any compensation," Gopal said.

Eric Blomgren, Chief Administrator and Director of Government Affairs for The New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience Store and Automotive Association, agrees.

"I just can't imagine that this won't take business that would have otherwise been in neighborhood stores, whether that's irregular players jumping in on a jackpot now doing it on their phone, or regular players making a portion of their purchases online," Blomgren said in a statement.

"The Lottery proposed online sales because we strongly believe that it is in the best interests of the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey Lottery, our retail network, the Pension system our proceeds serve, and our future players," The New Jersey Lottery said. "The backbone of the New Jersey Lottery is and will always be our network of traditional brick and mortar retailers."

The Lottery says online sales is crucial to maintaining retailer sales and growing sales by appealing to new players.

Gopal says he will appeal to Gov. Phil Murphy.

"As promised I will push forward legislation to make sure that small-businesses are included in this and I will lobby Governor Murphy over his final 2 years, as well as whomever his successor is to support legislation to respond to this disastrous action by the Lottery Commission," he said.

Lottery tickets can already be purchased through third-party apps.