

# Negotiations Could Clear Way For Mashpee Casino

Boston (WBZ) – Massachusetts is prepared to negotiate a casino compact with the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe that would clear the way for a massive full scale casino in Middleboro.

„We are prepared to negotiate within the parameters we have under existing law,“ said Massachusetts Governor Patrick on Monday.

Even though his proposal for three casinos died in the legislature, it's a good bet casino gambling is coming to the Bay State.

WBZ has learned the state is poised to start negotiating a separate contract, or compact, which would make an Indian casino in Middleboro a reality.

Negotiations would start once the state was formally notified by the tribe, and that notification is expected soon.

It's the same legal framework which allowed the Foxwoods Casino to be built in Connecticut. To date, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe has handed over more than USD 2 billion to that state since the doors opened in 1993.

And put simply, that's the bottom line. Massachusetts wants a piece of the Middleboro casino pie.

The Mashpee tribe, which is federally recognized, has certain legal rights as an independent nation. Nonetheless, they would like the state's approval.

The state in return for those approvals would like a percentage.

Connecticut gets 25 percent of the slot machine cash or more

than USD 10 million each month. You can expect Massachusetts to ask for that amount or more.

„Some form of expanded gaming is coming because the tribe has some tribal rights and we want to be ahead of that,“ said Patrick.

But the clock is ticking and WBZ has learned negotiations between the state and the chairman of the tribe, Shawn Hendricks, are expected to start this month.

Construction plans for their massive Middleboro resort casino are well under way.

Chairman Hendricks released a statement to WBZ: „The tribe continues to make great progress through the federal process... part of that process will be to ask the commonwealth to negotiate a compact at the appropriate time.“

And sources tell WBZ that time is near.