

Proposal to raise slot fees gains steam in Nevada

By Liz Benston, Las Vegas Sun

A long-running legislative proposal to increase slot machine fees is gaining steam as Nevada deals with a budget deficit of billions of dollars and a gubernatorial mandate to avoid increasing taxes.

Predictably, some casino interests oppose the fee increases, calling them taxes by another name and a shortsighted cash grab that doesn't fix the underlying problem of a tax system overly reliant on a single industry.

The issue is raising a philosophical debate about whether those who regulate the state's chief industry should be entirely funded by fees borne by the companies they oversee.

Would funding the budget entirely with fees make the industry's watchdog more dependent on the fortunes of the gaming industry and thus, hurt its independence?

Will it guarantee robust funds for a regulatory function crucial to the state, assuring that regulators stay ahead of the industry's growth and complexity?

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