

Internet gambling prompts rare meeting of Gaming Policy Committee

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Gov. Brian Sandoval will solicit all viewpoints on Internet gambling – including those of Las Vegas Sands Chairman Sheldon Adelson and other critics – to develop policies to manage and regulate the rapidly changing industry that could be headed to the United States someday.

Sandoval, presiding over the first meeting of his revamped Gaming Policy Committee on Wednesday, said the 11-member panel's objective would be to recommend public policy positions and suggest legislation in advance of online gaming approval and to make sure Nevada continues as a global leader in industry regulation and commercial competition.

The 90-minute meeting was primarily a policy review session for the committee, comprising industry leaders, state legislators, regulators and the public. Sandoval said the committee's purpose would be finely focused and within a strict timeline – he wants the group's efforts to be completed by the end of August so that it can issue a report and suggest bill drafts in advance of the 2013 legislative session.

Sandoval said the committee would meet four more times, roughly every four to six weeks, and he encouraged representatives of the gaming industry to weigh in with their views on how Nevada could best leverage Internet gambling and enable the state to be the gold standard in regulation and policy.

The Gaming Policy Committee is a seldom-used sounding board to discuss issues critical to the industry. The committee was

initiated by Gov. Grant Sawyer in 1961 and last used by Gov. Richard Bryan in 1981 to discuss pari-mutuel race wagering. Over the years, the committee has addressed the role of entertainment in the casino setting as well as discrimination and equal rights in casinos.

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