

Internet Gaming Launches in Ontario – Alberta Next?

Article By:

Michael D. Lipton, Q.C.

Kevin J. Weber

Pursuant to the Canadian Criminal Code, only provincial governments may conduct and manage Internet gaming. Eight provinces currently conduct and manage Internet gaming, the most recent of which, Ontario, launched its Internet gaming website on January 8, 2015.

The two Canadian provinces not currently offering Internet gaming are Alberta and Saskatchewan. Alberta, however, has recently commenced the process of finding a service provider to enable the ***Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC)*** to conduct and manage Internet gaming in Alberta.

Alberta is Canada's fourth largest province in terms of population and third largest province in terms of gross domestic product. In 2012-2013, Alberta earned nearly \$1.7 billion in net gaming revenue, and at 3.99%, had the highest percentage of provincial revenue derived from gaming.

In an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, AGLC CEO Bill Robinson stated that “too much money is being left on the table when it comes to Internet gambling sites and Alberta needs to cash in,” and “we estimate that there’s well over \$100 million that leaves Alberta [through unauthorized online gaming].”

On January 22, 2015, Alberta issued a ***request for information (RFI)*** for the provision of a Turnkey Internet Gaming Solution. The RFI invited qualified vendors to describe their vision and approach to the deployment of an Internet gaming solution and the delivery of related services. AGLC's preferred solution is a turnkey offering which includes a back-end operational platform, operations management and support services, and game content and marketing from multiple providers.

A primary vendor will provide the back-end platform and operational services for “a true turnkey environment requiring minimal intervention by the AGLC for day-to-day functions.” Other providers may provide game content and support services.

Vendor qualifications include:

- a reference base of one or more current clients, either government or private/commercial entities, to whom the vendor has legally supplied products or services in the Internet gaming

sector for a minimum of one (1) year;

- having experience in the operation of such products or services in regulated markets in either Europe or North America;
- prior to contract execution, being found suitable by the AGLC Due Diligence Unit and holding a gaming registration in Alberta; and
- a demonstrated operation of such products or services for real-money wagering.

In addition to issuing the RFI, the AGLC also released answers to questions asked by potential respondents. One such question led AGLC to answer that it will not be prohibiting the primary vendors from integrating/delivering games from non-primary vendors if those games are currently being offered to Alberta residents via offshore operators. This response indicates that the AGLC may have a tolerant attitude towards offshore operators who offer games to Alberta residents.

The RFI closed on February 26, 2015.

© Copyright 2025 Dickinson Wright PLLC

National Law Review, Volume V, Number 97

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/internet-gaming-launches-ontario-alberta-next>