



## Foxwoods casino must be approved by Philadelphia, Pa. court says

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HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - For a second time, Pennsylvania's highest court has sided with casino owners accusing the Philadelphia City Council of foot-dragging, saying Wednesday the city must approve the construction of **Foxwoods Casino** Philadelphia.

The **Supreme Court's** 6-0 decision said the City Council exceeded its authority by failing to act, and that the city must alter its records, maps and plans to show that the casino along South Philadelphia's riverfront has been approved.

In a 19-page opinion, Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille wrote that "there is ample evidence that the inaction was a deliberate attempt by (City) Council to simply delay the construction of the casinos."

Lawyers for Foxwoods contended that it had done everything that state law and city zoning rules required.

The decision clears the way for the Foxwoods group, which is led by the Mashantucket Pequot Indians of Connecticut, to break ground on the first phase of the \$670 million facility.

"There's nothing standing in the way that we know of," spokeswoman Maureen Garrity said.

Once ground is broken, full construction of the casino with 3,000 slot machines, an entertainment lounge, restaurants and bars will take 22 months, Garrity said. Later phases could include a hotel, retail space, a spa and convention space.

In December, the **Supreme Court** issued the same order for SugarHouse Casino, although construction on that facility is being held up by other issues.

Should the casinos open, Philadelphia could become the nation's largest city with casino gambling.

Frank DiCicco, the councilman whose district is home to both casinos, said he was angry and disgusted over the **Supreme Court's** decision, and warned that it takes away the ability of city residents and businesses to protect themselves from traffic problems and other potential issues that a new casino might cause.

The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board licensed Foxwoods in December 2006. However, questions about how the casino will affect residents and businesses nearby went unanswered in the gaming board's licensing process, DiCicco said.

"There are really serious questions that are important to the community" and to Foxwoods, said DiCicco, who has been holding hearings on the matter. "What if we wake up one day and have to live with these things?"