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Gambling Alert - September 13, 2022



How an SC Native American tribe came to operate an out-of-state casino

The casino is owned by the Catawba Nation, a Rock Hill-based Native American tribe. It never had a chance of coming to South Carolina. The Catawbans are barred by a deal signed nearly three decades ago that holds them to state, not federal, gambling laws in South Carolina.

And though legislators are unlikely to lift that ban any time soon, it has not stopped **some S.C. politicians and their families from aiding and reaping benefits** from the casino 45 miles northwest of the tribe's headquarters. Legislation sponsored by U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Seneca Republican, and Rep. Jim Clyburn, a Columbia Democrat, paved the way for the casino. Family members of Clyburn and former Republican Gov. Nikki Haley did work for the casino developer, receiving shares in gaming profits in return. Seeing a casino developed by a South Carolina tribe in North Carolina irks some Palmetto State politicians who see gambling as a way to boost revenue for schools and roads.

"It is silly for South Carolina residents to go to North Carolina to give them more revenue instead of spending that money here," said Rep. Todd Rutherford, D-Columbia, who has long been a proponent of allowing casinos in the state. "How tragic it is they weren't able to stay in their home state to be successful and to share that success

with the state.”

When the casino opened two years ago in its temporary facility, the tribe estimated it would be bringing in \$150 million in annual revenue within five years. It was projected the state of North Carolina would eventually receive between \$5 million and \$10 million annually as part of the revenue-sharing agreement it struck with the tribe. [Read](#)

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