

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL
GAMING POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT BRANCH
INFORMATION BRIEFING NOTE**

PREPARED FOR: Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General,
and Deputy Premier.

ISSUE

- Unregulated online gambling and the proliferation of online gambling advertising.

SUMMARY:

- The legalization of single event sports betting in Canada in 2021 coupled with the launch of a new regulated online gambling market in Ontario in 2022 has led to a proliferation of online gambling advertising across Canada and confusion among British Columbians about which online gambling websites are permitted in BC.
- The BC Lottery Corporation's (BCLC) PlayNow.com website is the only regulated online gambling website in BC. However, many commercial gambling websites hosted outside of Canada, including some that are regulated in Ontario, advertise in BC and allow British Columbians to gamble on their platforms.
- The Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) is working with the Crown Agencies Secretariat (CAS) in the Ministry of Finance to consider options to address unregulated online gambling websites in BC and provide advice for ministers.

BACKGROUND:

- In August 2021, the federal government amended the *Criminal Code* to allow Canadians to place bets on single sporting events, fights, and races.
- In April 2022, Ontario launched a new regulated online gambling market in their province conducted and managed by iGaming Ontario. iGaming Ontario has contracted with over 75 private operators, such as Bet 365, BetMGM, PokerStars, Draft Kings, and Party Casino, to deliver online gambling to Ontarians.
- These websites are intended only for players that are physically located in Ontario, but they may redirect out-of-jurisdiction players to international sites.
- Some operators have purchased significant national advertising packages with Canadian broadcasters that air across Canada. This has created market confusion for customers and an over-saturation of gambling advertising.
- Unregulated gambling websites operate outside of provincial jurisdiction and are not subject to GPEB's standards of integrity set for BCLC's PlayNow.com, including advertising and marketing standards and responsible gambling standards.

- GPEB has received inquiries about the proliferation of online gambling advertising, including through media requests, MLAs, the Health Officers Council of BC, and correspondence from the public.
- BC does not have the authority to regulate national broadcasting and the tools available to do so would be at the federal level.
- On June 20, 2023, a Senate private members' Bill S-269 was introduced. The Bill proposes a national framework to regulate sports betting advertising across Canada, limits on advertising, and ways to address the effects of harmful gambling activities.
- s.16

Provincial Analysis

- s.17
- s.17
- s.12; s.17
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- s.12; s.14; s.17

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CONSIDERATIONS:

- s.16

- s.14; s.16

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