

THROWN A COVID CURVE

Sports wagering was supposed to be the salvation for Colorado's Water Plan, but now, all bets are off



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The proposition was supposed to be simple: legalize and tax sports betting, fund the state water plan and solve a critical growth problem for Colorado.

In the dealer's choice of taxing and spending, everybody wins.

There are, however, no sure bets in politics and policy.

"The playbook has kind of gone out the window," said Dan Hartman, director of Colorado's

Division of Gaming.

He said there are too many unknowns right now to predict what, if any, revenue the sports tax might generate this year.

Now gaming officials estimate annual revenue will be as little as \$1.5 million, far below the original \$9.6 million, which itself was far below the estimated \$100 million a year needed to pay for the plan in full.

Moreover, House Bill 1327 last year put aside \$1.8 million for the Department of Revenue in the budget year that ends July 1 to pay for launch-

ing sports betting.

Colorado voters narrowly passed Proposition DD last November to allow the games to be operated by licensed casinos in the state. Sports wagering started May 1 in Colorado carrying a 10% tax. The historic launch, however, arrived with little fanfare as the state's gambling houses are temporarily shuttered for the coronavirus pandemic. That's not expected to change until at least June.

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CALL OF WILD STREET FIGHT

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