



N.J. Lottery Plans To Sell Tickets Online Direct To Players

By Jeff Goldman, August 18, 2023

New Jersey Lottery officials approved plans Thursday to expand online sales of draw games such as Powerball, Mega Millions and Jersey Cash 5 online starting late next year.

While lottery tickets can already be purchased through third-party companies on Lotto.com and via the Jackpocket app, the move would allow the direct sale of tickets to players through the state lottery's website, NJLottery.com, and New Jersey Lottery app beginning in fall 2024, a spokeswoman said Thursday.

Lotto.com and Jackpocket are courier services that take online orders and send people to lottery retail locations to buy paper tickets. Scratch-off tickets will continue to be available only in-person at retailers.

The new rule was proposed in September 2022 to "allow the New Jersey Lottery to remain relevant as more consumers obtain entertainment, information and goods via online options," the spokeswoman said.

Exact details of how the online sales will work are still to be worked out over the next year.

"Now that the proposal passed, operational issues will still need to be determined and planning for next steps is in its early stages," the lottery spokeswoman said.

While the new rule will give lottery player more options for how they purchase tickets, a non-profit trade association that represents retailers pushed back against the additional competition.

"I just can't imagine that this won't take business that would have otherwise been in neighborhood stores, whether that's irregular players jumping in on a jackpot now doing it on their phone, or regular players making a portion of their purchases online," the New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience Store, Automotive Association said Thursday in a statement.

"If there is a large market only captured by the availability of internet sales, shouldn't they already be satisfied by the existing lottery courier companies?"

Ultimately, the State selling lottery tickets directly to the consumer through the internet puts physical retail stores in competition with the very government entity that is their supplier, distributor, and chief advertiser.”

The New Jersey Lottery said brick-and-mortar retailers are still vital but that it must appeal to “a new generation of lottery players.”

“These new lottery players, primarily under the age of 40, who are more online, are essential to the long-term viability and success of the Lottery.

“We appreciate the retailers concerns about the potential impact of online sales on our network of nearly 7,000 traditional brick and mortar retailers. The Lottery proposed online sales because we strongly believe that it is in the best interests of the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey Lottery, our retail network, the pension system our proceeds serve, and our future players.”