



**Repeal:**

WAC 230-13-067 Group 12—Electronic puzzle and pattern solving game standards.

**February 2016 – Up for Discussion and Filing**

ITEM 8: February 2016 Commission Meeting Agenda.	Statutory Authority 9.46.070, 9.46.0201
Who proposed the rule changes?	
Commissioner, see attached request.	
Proposed Changes	
<p>In July 2015, the Commissioners authorized Group 12 amusement games to be played by persons 21 and over. Since this time, numerous questions and concerns have been raised. This proposed rule change provides the Commission with the option of repealing the rule authorizing Group 12 amusement games.</p> <p>A Small Business Economic Impact Statement will be prepared and available on our website.</p> <p>Attachment: Letter from Representative Christopher Hurst, dated January 26, 2016, asking the Commission to consider rescinding the authorization of Group 12 amusement games.</p>	
Licensee Impacts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of January 11, 2016, there were 204 Group 12 amusement games in the state at approximately 80 licensed locations.</li> <li>Licensees have purchased or leased these amusement games from manufacturers. Licensees have indicated they will lose about \$9 million if Group 12 amusement games are no longer authorized. (This includes the actual cost outlay, license fees, research and development costs, and the value of the four-year rental contracts.) The amusement games could be resold to a jurisdiction where they are allowed.</li> </ul>	
Agency Impacts	
Staff may need to work with licensees to make sure the amusement games are removed from the state.	
Statements Supporting or Opposing the Proposed Rule Change	
None	
Staff Recommendation	
File for further discussion.	
Proposed Effective Date for Rule Change	
31 days from filing.	

**Repealed Section:**

**~~WAC 230-13-067 Group 12—Electronic puzzle and pattern solving game standards.~~**

~~In Group 12 games, players must correctly solve a puzzle to win a prize, which is viewable by the player before each puzzle is presented.~~

~~(1) The game must allow the player to view the prize that is available before each play of the game without the insertion of money or any other thing of value; and~~

~~(2) Prizes are awarded based upon the player's skill in correctly discerning a pattern and completing that pattern; and~~

~~(3) When a game presents a potential winning pattern, the puzzle must be capable of completion within the predetermined time period; and~~

~~(4) Group 12 amusement games are for adults over the age of twenty-one only and may only be operated by licensees where persons under the age of twenty-one are prohibited from entering.~~

~~[Statutory Authority: RCW [9.46.070](#) and [9.46.0331](#). WSR 15-15-063 (Order 713), § 230-13-067, filed 7/10/15, effective 8/10/15.]~~

**Griffin, Tina (GMB)**

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**From:** Hunter, Amy (GMB)  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 28, 2016 6:45 AM  
**To:** Griffin, Tina (GMB)  
**Subject:** Fwd: rule change

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE smartphone

----- Original message -----

**From:** Julia Patterson <jpatt3kids@gmail.com>  
**Date:** 01/27/2016 8:35 PM (GMT-08:00)  
**To:** "Hunter, Amy (GMB)" <amy.hunter@wsgc.wa.gov>  
**Subject:** rule change

Because the rules process takes several months, I would like to have staff prepare a rule for the possible repeal of Group 12 amusement games.

I won't be present at the February meeting, but am hopeful that Chair Stearns will consider putting this rule up for discussion and possible filing at that time.

Filing this rule is not an indication of support or opposition to repeal. It simply provides the commission with this option, should our deliberations on Group 12 amusement games lead us in this direction.

Please share this request with Chair Stearns, and my fellow Gambling Commissioners.

Thank you,  
Commissioner Julia Patterson



January 26, 2016

Chair Sterns  
P.O. Box 42400  
Olympia, WA 98504

Chair Sterns, Commissioners and Staff:

I am writing today to express my serious concerns with the decision to extend the concept of “amusement games” in the State of Washington to electronic terminals that greatly resemble video lottery terminals or slot machines. I think we should slow the process to implement additional rules and scale back Group 12 games to what the legislature intended amusement games to be.

When the legislature authorized amusement games in 1973, it did so only as a social pastime for charities. We authorized skill-based games where the outcome depends on a material degree of skill and where only merchandise could be awarded. The legislature only gave the Commission authority to regulate these types of games to ensure that the games were fair.

In July 2015, the Commission passed a rule allowing for a brand new class of amusement games – Group 12 games – where players must correctly solve an electronic puzzle in order to win a prize. In concept, the games sound rather innocuous, but in practice, they are a departure from Groups 1-11. They are not traditional carnival games, crane games, arcade games, cake walks, and fishing derbies. Group 12 games, currently deployed in some 80 locations throughout the state, look nearly indistinguishable from traditional slot machines.

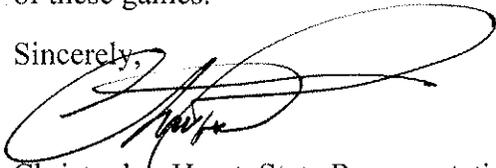
These new games do more than award prizes of “hard merchandise.” Many businesses throughout the state are currently awarding gift cards that function as cash cards. These cards, in some instances, are worth hundreds of dollars. The establishment then allows a patron to buy a nominal item with the card and receive his or her change in cash. This is very disturbing considering that we now have a game that looks like a slot machine paying back cash to the players like a slot machine.

I also understand from testimony provided before the Commission on January 14, 2016, that these 204 “electronic puzzle games” currently deployed in the state include random number generators and/or games sets, but have not been subjected to any kind of testing to ensure they meet the standards of fair play. In at least one establishment, a single machine brought in \$3,600 in gaming revenues in a single month. With a win per unit of \$120 per day, the Commission should take steps to ensure the machines are actually fair, similar to the rigorous testing and regulation other gaming equipment in this state must endure.

Repeated polling by the Commission over the years, as well as public votes on gaming initiatives, have demonstrated to us that our citizens believe there is sufficient gaming already in play in the state to meet demand. Now, with the authorization of these Group 12 games, we are entering into the uncharted waters of convenience gambling in the state, a place from which it is difficult to pull back. Before we end up with 12,000 video lottery-like machines in 4,000 bars and restaurants like Oregon, or 25,000 of these machines in our convenience stores and gas stations like Georgia, the citizens of this state are entitled to a better policy making process. There should be a legislative process rather than a rule making one before the Commission. To forge ahead into convenience gaming, particularly with a tax statutorily capped at 2%, without a larger policy conversation would be unwise.

I appreciate that the Commission is struggling with these Group 12 games and how to regulate them. I believe that effort precisely illustrates how different these games are from Groups 1-11. Therefore, I ask that you consider rescinding your authorization of Group 12 games, go back to the drawing board and seek legislative approval prior to the expansion of, or additional licensing of these games.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Hurst', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Christopher Hurst, State Representative  
31<sup>st</sup> Legislative District

cc: Governor Jay Inslee  
Speaker Frank Chopp