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Group: Greyhound organization unlawfully active in Iowa politics

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The Iowa greyhound racing organization is engaged in political activity and should be barred from receiving state dog racing promotion money, a national greyhound advocacy group said Tuesday.

Grey2K USA of Somerville, Mass., asked the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission on Tuesday to reject a request from the Iowa Greyhound Association for about \$20,000 in dog racing promotion funds.

The national group, which wants Iowa to ban greyhound racing, also asked state regulators to review all past awards of promotional money to the Iowa Greyhound Association. Since 2003, the association has received \$134,683 in state dog promotion funds.

Officials with the Iowa Greyhound Association didn't have an immediate comment Tuesday.

Under Iowa law, the commission annually awards money to a nonprofit group for research, education and marketing of dog racing in Iowa, including public relations and other promotional techniques.

The law specifically says the recipient "shall not expend the funds on political activity or on any attempt to influence legislation."

Christine Dorchak, president of Grey2K USA, wrote in a letter to Iowa regulators that the Iowa Greyhound Association has retained at least four lobbyists.

In addition, the association has used state promotional money to publish a newsletter to promote and encourage referendum and legislative lobbying campaigns, which in turn seems to prompt campaign contributions by its members, she said.

Dorchak said she plans to attend a state commission meeting on July 29 in Johnston to present her case.

Keith Soring, director of racing for the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, said Tuesday he expects the five-member commission to discuss Grey2K USA's claims. The matter may be referred to the Iowa attorney general's office for a legal interpretation, he said.

The Iowa Legislature last session considered a proposal that would have allowed greyhound tracks in Dubuque and Council Bluffs to halt dog racing. In return, the two tracks would have paid a total of \$10 million annually to state.

The bill failed to win approval, but supporters said the measure will likely be reintroduced next session because interest in parimutuel dog racing has dwindled.

Iowa's dog racing industry employs more than 1,200 people at Iowa tracks and farms, boosting the state's economy, greyhound racing supporters said.