Zynga moves to enter US gambling market

The Associated Press

Online games company Zynga said it has asked Nevada gambling regulators for a decision that could pave the way for it to enter the U.S. gambling market.

This follows Zynga's October disclosure that it has signed a deal to offer online poker and casino games, played with real money, in the U.K. It plans to launch those games in the first half of 2013.

Zynga Inc. said in an email late Wednesday that it is seeking an "application for a preliminary finding of suitability" from the Nevada Gaming Control Board. This, the company says, is part of its plan to enter regulated "real-money gaming," that is, gambling markets.

Zynga has not said what it plans to do with a gaming license. But the company, whose games are played primarily on Facebook, has faltered in recent months and is looking for additional revenue sources beyond online games such as "FarmVille 2" and "Words With Friends."

The San Francisco-based company says the process with Nevada regulators should take 12 to 18 months. If Zynga passes the first regulatory hurdle, it can then apply for a gaming license in the state. That, the company said, takes two to three months.

Zynga's stock rose 15 cents, or 6.5 percent, to $2.47 in midday trading Thursday. The company went public about a year ago, when its stock priced at $10 per share.

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