

Daniels: Store incentives overpriced

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By Michelle L. Quinn / Post-Tribune correspondent

HAMMOND — Gov. Mitch Daniels absolutely wants Cabela's to come to Indiana, but the state won't be paying the store's asking price to do it.

According to the Indiana Economic Development Corp., retail businesses move money only from place to place instead of bringing new money into the economy, Daniels said. He was the speaker Thursday during The Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours event at Horseshoe Casino.

While sporting goods stores Cabela's and the proposed Bass Pro Shop in Portage have the potential to bring millions of dollars into the state, allowing them both to have sales increment tax financing (STIF) — which is on the books but has never been used in Indiana, according to Daniels — would cost more than it's worth.

"Both companies asked for identical amounts of money, and the (IEDC) didn't like it," he said. "The IEDC has measured the cost benefits of spending the money vs. the return, and we don't do retail."

Daniels also said Indiana has another sporting goods entity, Gander Mountain, that never asked for the amounts of money Cabela's and Bass Pro Shop have. "We'd love to see them both come to Indiana, and we plan to entice them with other tools. But we don't know how we can offer them 10 or 20 times more (than Gander Mountain received)," Daniels said.

Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott Jr. could not be reached for comment Thursday night.