



Date: 18 October, 2022

RE: Importance of IGRA

Monday, October 17, marked a noteworthy anniversary for Indian gaming. 34 years ago Federal lawmakers enacted the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, the federal regulatory framework governing Indian gaming today. The law's three decades of implementation show how critical tribal leaders' engagement with federal lawmakers and courts were to maintaining the powerful tool of Indian gaming prior to its enactment.

Many years of policy discussions beyond the topic of gaming preceded IGRA at the federal and local levels. These discussions considered the overwhelming need for tribal economies' sustainability and reflected the moral and legal obligation for the federal government to cultivate tribal governments. The IGRA's objectives should be understood in light of these policy discussions.

The law's objectives include support for tribal regulatory capacity, the protection of Indian gaming's industry integrity, and economic resilience in Indian country. In many ways, the IGRA was a response to the Supreme Court's 1987 affirmation of tribal governments' authority to operate and govern gaming on Indian land, free from state regulation. The 1988 law responded in part to non-tribal objections to this ruling with an extensive and unique system of oversight. This oversight remains in place as the Indian gaming industry has grown to a nearly \$40 billion per year industry, made up of 248 tribes who license over 500 gaming operations on Indian land in 29 states.

Indian gaming's oversight system is unique in the global gaming industry. Under the IGRA:

- Tribal governments must expend revenue for statutorily mandated purposes only.
- Indian gaming includes the gaming industry's only federal gaming regulatory body.
- Indian gaming remains a governmental enterprise whose primary beneficiaries are the tribe and its citizens.

Visit [www.NIGC.gov](http://www.NIGC.gov) to learn more about the NIGC 3 For 35 Project— a year-long project emphasizing the importance of conversations among the tribal gaming regulatory community about workforce preparedness.





NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION

CHAIR'S NOTICE - Chairman E. Sequoyah Simermeyer

While attending the Global Gaming Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada earlier this month I had the opportunity to hear a distinguished panel of Indian country leaders. Among them was the Honorable Ben Campbell- the only surviving original co-sponsor of H.R. 2507, a legislative proposal that led to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

A talented federal lawmaker in both houses and a Native American role model for servant leadership and tenacious advocacy, I am grateful Senator Campbell was part of the critical discussions during IGRA's formation. His hard work helped to establish a framework under the circumstances of the day that tribes are leveraging now to protect future generations of Native communities.

The NIGC owes its mission as a federal regulatory agency to the IGRA and the many federal lawmakers and tribal leaders who engaged with one another to shape this consequential law.

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