



Date: October 17, 2023

Re: IGRA's 35th Anniversary

Today, October 17, 2023, marks the 35-year anniversary of Indian Gaming Regulatory Act's enactment. As the Indian gaming industry has grown today to be an over \$40 billion industry with over 500 operations licensed by nearly 250 tribal governments on Indian land in 29 states; there are over three decades worth of views from tribal governments, regulators, operators and the industry's partners about the federal law's impact and its potential for the future.

From the NIGC's national perspective, the law established the Commission as a federal regulatory body with a unique set of responsibilities, the purpose of which is to help ensure Indian gaming remains a governmental resource for those tribes who pursue gaming. As a source for much needed opportunity in many tribal communities, Indian gaming supports necessary social programs, cultivates governing capacity, and builds economies. All three of which work together to help ensure more self-sufficient tribal communities and stronger tribal governments.

Given Indian gaming's impact and potential, meeting IGRA's regulatory responsibilities as the law intended requires every Commission to manage its authority with the goal of effective and efficient oversight and with a recognition of each tribal nation's distinct sovereign authority. IGRA also expects Indian gaming to remain governmental gaming, even amid the industry's past (and future) growth and evolution.

The debates and legislative proposals that law makers were weighing leading up to IGRA's enactment, demonstrate the diversity of positions and interests surrounding the judicially affirmed rights of tribes to govern and offer gaming. As law makers considered a framework to address how and by whom Indian gaming should be regulated; they put forward balances to many commercial and governmental questions. And amid the law's continuing affirmation of tribes' sovereign authority today; tribal governments' dedication and vision has made Indian gaming an established and innovative part of the broader gaming industry.

Visit 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.





Some of the unique gaming regulatory features created by IGRA and found only in Indian gaming include the implications of game classifications, the restricted governmental uses for gaming revenue, and the specific oversight and approval responsibilities held by the Federal regulator. These features are all aspects of Indian gaming's oversight framework that make Indian gaming unlike any other part of the gaming industry; and in doing so aim for Indian gaming's regulation to ensure Indian gaming exists to be a governmental economic resource held and controlled by tribal governments.

The national network of regulators working to protect an industry-wide reputation is also a feature created by the law. That network made up predominantly of dedicated tribal regulators provides local solutions to detect and mitigate threats to gaming assets as well as a rich resource of creative approaches that shape those oversight practices that will reassure the public of Indian gaming's integrity, safety, and economic success.

IGRA's features have provided a path for Indian gaming's regulators to meet the law's objectives. From watershed shifts in gaming platforms and offerings, to the impact of a global pandemic on the industry, to the ever-growing considerations around the threats and opportunities technology represents for Indian gaming; IGRA provides the goals and objectives Indian gaming's federal regulator is charged to achieve.

I hope you consider sharing your insights and experiences on the impact and potential of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act this week and encourage you to visit the NIGC's website where in the coming days you can find a short video featuring other perspectives on this topic.

I am grateful for your interest in my perspective as a federal regulator, and the valuable insights of the many voices and perspectives featured on this video. Thank you for lending your voice and ideas for Indian Gaming's future.

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