



December 23, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Scott Wheat, General Counsel
Spokane Tribe of Indians
23215 W. Long Lake Road
Ford, WA 99013

Re: Review of a Development Agreement for the Spokane Tribe of Indians

Dear Mr. Wheat:

This letter responds to your October 29, 2020 request for the National Indian Gaming Commission's Office of General Counsel to review a Development Agreement between the WG-Airway Heights, LLC and the Spokane Tribe of Indians (Tribe). Specifically, you have asked for my opinion whether the document is a management contract requiring the NIGC Chair's approval under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. You also asked for my opinion whether the Development Agreement violates IGRA's requirement that the Tribe have the sole proprietary interest in its gaming activity.

In my review, I considered the following submission, which is unexecuted, but I represented to be in substantially final form:

- Development Agreement, draft dated December 16, 2020;

The Development Agreement contains terms similar to other agreements the Office of General Counsel has already reviewed and analyzed, opinion letters for which are available on the NIGC's website. Applying the same analysis here, it is my opinion that the Development Agreement is not a management contract and does not require the approval of the NIGC Chair. It is also my opinion that it does not violate IGRA's sole proprietary interest requirement.

It is my understanding that the draft is represented to be in substantially final form, and if the agreement changes in any material way prior to execution or is inconsistent with assumptions made herein, this opinion shall not apply. Further, this opinion is limited to the document listed above. This opinion does not include or extend to any other agreements not submitted for review.

Scott Wheat, General Counsel

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Please note that it is my intent that this letter be released to the public through the NIGC's website. If you have any objection to this disclosure, please provide a written statement explaining the grounds for the objection and highlighting the information that you believe should be withheld.¹ If you object on the grounds that the information qualifies as confidential commercial information subject to withholding under Exemption Four of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA),² please be advised that any withholding should be analyzed under the standard set forth in *Food Marketing Institute v. Argus Leader Media*.³ Any claim of confidentiality should also be supported with "a statement or certification by an officer or authorized representative of the submitter."⁴ Please submit any written objection to FOIASubmitterReply@nigc.gov **within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter**. After this time elapses, the letter will be made public and objections will no longer be considered.⁵ If you need any additional guidance regarding potential grounds for withholding, please see the United States Department of Justice's Guide to the Freedom of Information Act at <https://www.justice.gov/oip/doj-guide-freedom-information-act-0>.

If you have any questions, please contact NIGC Senior Attorney Esther Dittler at (202) 632-7003 or by email at esther_dittler@nigc.gov.

Sincerely,



Michael Hoenig
General Counsel

¹ See 25 C.F.R. § 517.7(c).

² 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4).

³ 139 S. Ct. 2356 (2019).

⁴ See 25 C.F.R. § 517.7(d).

⁵ *Id.*