



## **Daniel Little Reappointed as Associate Commissioner at the National Indian Gaming Commission**

*On May 16, 2013 Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell announced that National Indian Gaming Associate Commissioner Daniel Little would be reappointment to the Commission for an additional three year term. Commissioner Little was initially appointed by former Secretary Ken Salazar in February 2010. Indian Gaming magazine recently had an opportunity to ask Commissioner Little to reflect on his first term, what he hopes to achieve in a second term and his views on Internet gaming.*

### **What accomplishments are you most proud of from your previous term?**

In the fall of 2010, the Commission began an effort to identify regulations that needed review. The staff did a remarkable job of combing through our regulations to assemble a list of suggestions of their own as well as from tribes. This process was new to the Commission, but well received by tribes. We were able to work collaboratively with tribes to develop an agenda of regulatory revisions. We began with informal drafts which informed the later formal rulemaking process, so tribes had already had an opportunity to provide comments and were not surprised when we published notices of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register. As a result of working respectfully with tribes, we were able to revise a number of important regulations including the Class II MICS and Technical Standards, which provided for practical controls to further secure the integrity of the industry.

### **How do you see Indian gaming and the work the NIGC does evolving over the next three years?**

First off, it has been an honor to serve the Administration and Indian Country over the last three years at the National Indian Gaming Commission. I'm also very grateful and humbled to have been considered by former Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and to have been reappointed by Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell for an additional term on the Commission.

Since 2010, the Commission has pushed forward a very ambitious plan to transform the NIGC into a more compliance oriented and transparent agency. A key component of this transformation is our effort to provide better training and technical assistance. The Indian gaming industry continues to evolve and many times, tribes are on the leading edge of introducing new technology to their customers. As such, the NIGC must also be at the forefront of new technology and be in a position to provide tribes with the technical assistance they require. Over the next three years, I see the NIGC continuing to play a large role in ensuring compliance through high-quality training and technical assistance programs.

### **What other critical issues are currently facing Indian gaming and how is the NIGC responding to these issues?**

I believe the biggest issue facing Indian gaming is increased competition and market saturation. No longer is tribal gaming the only option for many customers. As tribes transition to this more competitive environment by streamlining their operations and looking for efficiencies, the NIGC must also adapt accordingly to ensure strong regulation is not compromised. We must also continue to be a valuable resource for the industry by providing the necessary training and technical assistance needed to preserve compliance.

### **How important is tribal consultation to the work the NIGC is doing?**

The Commission has done a good job establishing a track record of meaningful dialogue with tribes. We know that the process of consultation is just as important as the substance of consultation. True government-to-government consultation must be inclusive, collaborative and meaningful, as well as an on-going dialogue and exchange of ideas. For the NIGC in particular, consulting with tribes is especially important because of the three-tiered regulatory framework that IGRA established. As the primary regulators, tribes are positioned to provide valuable insight regarding the practicality of rules and how best to ensure the integrity of their operations. Over the last three years, we successfully revised a number of very substantial regulations. This was only achieved because the tribes conveyed their views and provided quality comments, thus informing the Commission's final regulations which further protect Indian gaming. I am very grateful to the tribes for their on-going communication with the Commission.

### **How is the NIGC different today than when IGRA was passed by Congress back in 1988?**

The NIGC is still relatively young as far as Federal agencies go. When Congress passed IGRA, it created the NIGC and provided the framework for the Agency to begin implementing the law. Since then, the Commission has developed extensive regulations to create standards for the industry, hired

many experts to ensure compliance with the regulations and implemented a training and technical assistance program to provide the guidance to ensure that the industry has the tools necessary to maintain compliance. Today the NIGC is strong, collaborative, transparent and dedicated to working with tribes to ensure compliance.

**Can you speak about the issue of Internet gaming, and the potential implications it could have for tribes?**

Internet gaming is a complicated issue on which tribes have varying positions. Some tribes have been very clear about their desire to explore Internet gaming as a potential market. Any expansion of this segment of the industry will require action by Congress. If the NIGC is tasked with regulating Internet gaming, we will do so in accordance with the law just as we do now.

**What role do you see the NIGC playing in Internet gaming?**

Currently, there is no pending legislation which provides a role for the NIGC. However, we have heard from tribes that they desire us to play a regulatory role should a bill be enacted. We have been monitoring the issue and will be prepared should Congress pass legislation.

**Why do you think it's important to have a strong regulated Indian gaming industry?**

I believe Indian gaming is the hallmark for gaming regulation. IGRA provides for a three-tiered system that includes tribes as the on-the-ground regulators, states with regard to Class-III compacts, and the NIGC providing federal oversight. IGRA's policy is also that Indian gaming provides for a means of promoting tribal economic development, self-sufficiency and strong tribal governments. If you look at tribal facilities, you will see strong governance as indicated by their commitment and dedication of tremendous resources to regulation. Tribes must be the

primary beneficiaries of their own gaming revenue and strong regulation provides for that. ♣

*For more information about the National Indian Gaming Commission, visit [www.nigc.gov](http://www.nigc.gov).*

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