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CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Good morning. Why don't we go ahead and get started. Feel free to come join us at the table, if you'd like. We certainly have the room. And that way, if you have any questions, you can just come right up, have a seat.

See, the chairman is -- your hosting chairman is insisting that you come to the table.

MR. FORSMAN: I'm not insisting, I was just encouraging.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: I know it seems unnecessary speaking into the microphone, but I understand that we'll be recorded.

Are you hooked up to the sound system?

THE COURT REPORTER: No.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: I want to make sure -- this is Cheryl. She's our transcriptionist back here. So she will be transcribing today's meeting.

So before we get started, I'd like to turn over the microphone to Chairman Leonard Forsman from the Suquamish Tribe, whose territory and land that we are on and who has been so gracious to host us.

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Thanks, Tracie, for bringing the MR. FORSMAN: Commission here to Suquamish, the Port Madison Indian Reservation. A lot of you folks are familiar with us, so I don't have to go into great detail of our history, but we did sign a treaty at Point Elliott, and this reservation was established by that treaty with Chief Seattle and a number of other chiefs. The reservation was allotted in 1886. And now we are in the business of trying to reacquire a lot of the land we lost after it was allotted and sold. So we continue to make that a priority of our tribal government. And of course, gaming and fishing are our primary sources of revenue, and also some taxation, so that we've been able to use those resources to reacquire a lot of land that was, in our belief, stolen from us. So I know a lot of the tribes in this room have similar histories and are engaged in the same efforts.

So I want to keep my comments short, because I'm in a council meeting right now. It's been handed over to our vice-chairman, who probably already ended the meeting. So I may have the morning off. He's not as interested in public comment, usually, as I am.

But just to let you know that, those who maybe come from out of town, there is lots to do here. We

have Chief Seattle's grave site in a cemetery over the hill, and we have our old museum, which is still open, down the street on Sandy Hook Road. We're building a new museum downtown, as well, and our longhouse is down there, which is a couple years old, and our dock. It's been a goal of mine to kind of create some new cultural presence in Suquamish. So if you haven't been down there in a while, it's definitely changed.

And there is a number of other towns that we work with in tourism partnerships around here, which are Poulsbo, Port Gamble, and downtown Winslow on Bainbridge Island are a number of nice places to go.

So those are some things that we've been involved in a lot as we build our new museum and trying to promote tribal tourism as a part of some of the things that we're also engaged in with our resort and casino. We have a number of other corporate event spaces, including Kiana Lodge, which you've been to, as well.

So on behalf of the Suquamish Tribe, a little over 1,000 members, and our seven-member tribal council, I'd like to welcome you to Suquamish and thank you for coming to the Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort.

Tracie?

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CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Thank you, Chairman.

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MR. NOKES: Bill Nokes, deputy director of accounting for Tulalip TGA.

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MR. HALSTEAD: Jason Halstead. I'm the executive director of the Nez Perce Tribe's Gaming Commission.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Lael Echo-Hawk here on behalf of Spokane.

MR. MATHERLY: Andrew Matherly, Spokane Tribal member. And I represent the gaming commission chairman,

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- 1 and I'm representing our tribal leaders.
- MR. FRIAS: Richard Frias. I'm a legislative
- 3 coordinator for NICA.

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- 4 MR. ALLEN: Jerry Allen, Seven Cedars Casino 5 and Jamestown Sklallam Tribe.
- 6 MR. ROY HATCH: Roy Hatch, gaming commission 7 for the Tulalip Tribes.
 - MS. BRUNER: Lawana Bruner, Stillaguamish
 Tribe, TGA director.
- MR. JEFF HATCH: Jeff Hatch, Tulalip Tribal
 Gaming Agency, DD of licensing.
- MR. HOENIG: Michael Hoenig. I'm an attorney at the NIGC.
- MR. ROBERTS: Larry Roberts. I'm the General
 Counsel of NIGC.
- 16 CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: And I'm Tracie Stevens.

 17 I'm a member of the Tulalip Tribes, and I am the

 18 Chairwoman of the National Indian Gaming Commission.
- 19 Welcome. I'm glad that you all could make it.
- 20 Many of the tribes at the table, for those of you,
- 21 looking at Kathy and people who are from out of the
- 22 area, these are local tribes here. So you've probably
- come, aside from us, the farthest. So welcome to the
- great Northwest from the people, the co-Salish people
- 25 here and all of the co-Salish here, of which I am one.

We have an agenda here today. Well, first I want to say thanks to our staff. Rayanne Morris is with our compliance division back there, and Mark Phillips, who is our regional director. Many of you know both Rayanne and Mark. We have, of course, Mike and Larry from our General Counsel's office. We appreciate everything everyone has done to help us prepare for these meetings. As is traditional for most people, Indian people here, we want to give thanks to the people who helped us prepare for this meeting and set us up for this meeting. So thank you all for your time.

Also back here is Cheryl. Like I said, she's our transcriptionist. We will be having everyone speak into the microphone. I know it seems awkward because we're all so close together, but we want to make sure that she can hear us.

So we have an agenda here today. And before I go on, someone -- the chairman had asked me where the other commissioners were. Just so you know how we do this, there are three commissioners, and we take turns rotating so that the travel burden isn't on any one of us. And we are coming out to Indian country so that we can ease the travel burden on the tribes and try to go to the regions. And that way, it's a little more accessible, by region, to attend these meetings.

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So we bring the staff that we need and try to keep that to a minimum. And then that way, you all get to know all of our commissioners as we go around.

So we have this agenda here, if you take a look at it. We've been in the past month or so going through the topics rather quickly because we have been on the road since April, May. I've forgotten. There has been 23 consultations as part of our Notice of Regulatory Review. And it has been progressive on all the topics that are here today, where we've started with discussions, then we went to a discussion draft. That was informed by the meetings we had with tribes. The discussion drafts morphed into what are now Notices of Proposed Rules.

So we've heard comments before we drafted, then we drafted, then we heard more comments on the draft. And on some of these we're at the stage of Notice of Proposed Rules. So you'll see a mix in your packet of Federal Register publications and discussion drafts, and then on the agenda there are some that do not have a draft at all, we're still in the discussion phase.

So they should be in the order that they appear on the agenda. And I want to thank the staff here regionally who has done a great job organizing this

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so that it's easier on the reader to follow along as we move along through the agenda.

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At any time, and we understand that there are many other things that you all may need to do today, we leave time in the agenda should anybody come with a prepared statement on any part of the agenda. We will go, in terms of our presentation and discussion, we will go in the order of the agenda, but we also understand that, for the sake of time, there may be individuals that cannot stay and may have something they need to say about something further along in the agenda. So we do have breaks in here where we open the floor for comments on any parts of the agenda.

You'll see, and Larry will go over this, that we will not be going over the Minimum Internal Control Standards for Class II or Class III or the Technical Standards for Class II machine play. That was a decision that the Commission made in July and August, to move those to a parallel track with the Tribal Advisory Committee, which will be meeting over the next three days after today.

But it does still leave us quite a bit to talk about. So fear not, there will be plenty to talk about, especially when we get to the part about proceedings before the Commission. So that's really exciting for

the lawyers.

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So that's the agenda. We will move along as the group -- you know, it all depends on who is in the group and what people have to say. But we may move faster, we may move slower. We'll leave it to the group. And we should be able to get through all the topics today and let you know where we're at.

So if it's time, are there any individuals who have come with a prepared statement that you want to read to the record?

Okay. Since we don't have any takers, I'll turn it over to Larry Roberts, our General Counsel. And he'll be going through Group 1 on the agenda and the subjects under Group 1.

MR. ROBERTS: Okay. Good morning, everyone.

My name is Larry Roberts, and I'm a member of the Oneida

Nation of Wisconsin. And as the Chairwoman said, we're

going to go through the PowerPoint. It should be in

your materials, as well, and then we'll open it up for

discussion for Group 1.

So just a couple of housekeeping points. We want to make clear that tribal consultation is a dialogue between tribal governments and the federal governments, and only tribes that are designees can attend and participate in these meetings. They are not

open to the public.

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When the Commission went forward with the regulatory review agenda, they took into account Executive Order 13,175, which talks about policymaking criteria and directs tribal agencies, when determining to -- whether to establish federal standards, to consult with tribes on the need for those federal standards and any alternatives that would preserve the prerogatives and authority of Indian tribes. So that's what we're doing today.

When the Commission went through with the regulatory review agenda, we asked tribes and the public for comment on which regulations the Commission should review and in what order. And from that comment that we received from tribes and the public, the Commission moved forward with these various groups, Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, and took into account many different factors; the subject matter; like I said, the comments we received in response to the notice of inquiry; and the estimated time and resources it would take to get through each group.

They don't indicate priorities. There is -some of the groups, the regulations we have circulated drafts in some of the groups and some of the groups we have not. But they don't indicate a priority, they are

grouped in terms of what the Commission thought would make sense in terms of regulatory review.

There has been three phases for those of you who have been following the consultations. We have put forward a number of preliminary drafts before even going forward with a proposed rule. And so the Commission has circulated a number of preliminary drafts for comment, and now, for a few of these rules that we'll talk about later today, the Commission has moved forward to a proposed rule and it has been published in the Federal Register seeking comment. And then once the Commission receives comment on those rules, on those proposals, they'll consider the comments and decide whether to move forward with the final rule and how to make changes to that rule, if any.

So as the Chairwoman mentioned, all consultations are transcribed. One of the purposes of that is that for those of you that are following the regulatory review process, you may not be able to attend some or all consultations, and so you can go right to our Web site and click on the transcripts and sort of see what the conversation was in the consultation for that day and what issues were tribes sharing and suggesting to the Commission. So not only are the transcripts on the Web site, but the written comments

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are also on the Web site.

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The Commission has made a commitment to tribes that every comment that it receives will be reviewed and considered, that both the proposed rule and the final rule will include a summary of comments, discussing the comments that were received by the Commission, as well as why or why not the Commission decided to accept the comment. And the Commission is committed to a clear, transparent process.

So as you'll see in the agenda today, there are a number -- as I mentioned earlier, there are five different groups. Group 1 is what we're going to talk about this morning. It covers fees that the agency assesses on tribal gaming operations, Part 523, which governs the review and approval of existing ordinances, the Facility License Notifications, and Buy Indian regulation. And then later today we'll talk -- later this morning we'll talk about Group 2, which is enforcement issues as well as the rules for proceedings before the Commission.

As the Chairwoman mentioned, Group 3, the Class II Minimum Internal Controls, the Class III Minimum Internal Controls and the Technical Standards, the Commission is utilizing the TAC. The TAC is going to be meeting here over the next few days. We're -- the

Commission wants the TAC to provide advice to the

Commission's review. And then what the Commission will

do is it will review that advice that they receive from

the TAC, and then decide whether and how to move forward

with amendments to those regulations and those parts.

And then the Commission will engage in a consultation

process on any changes there.

Group 4 covers background investigations for primary management officials and key employees and gaming licenses for those officials. It's basically trying to incorporate a pilot program that's been in place for some time. Part 571, monitoring and investigations, and then Part 537, dealing with background investigations.

And Group 5 is self regulation of Class II gaming and whether the Commission should move forward with some sort of regulation on sole propriety interest.

So Group 1, Part 514, this is one of the groups where we've had a proposed rule that's been issued. Proposed rules for Part 514 and 523 were both issued on October 12th. The closing period for that comment deadline is a week from today. And then we also have in this group 559 and the Buy Indian regulation.

So in your packet of materials that you received this morning, you should have a copy of

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Part 514, the proposed rule. If you don't have a copy of that, please raise your hand and we'll get you a copy.

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So a couple of changes in the proposed rule, to highlight --

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: It's after the blue, if everybody got it, it's after the blue. Okay, sorry. Go ahead.

MR. ROBERTS: A couple of proposed changes in the rule. One is after -- based on comments that we received on the preliminary draft and these consultations, the proposed rule proposes to have the fee calculation based on a gaming operation's fiscal year rather than the calendar year.

I think the idea behind that is for -- you know, a number of gaming operations have -- their fiscal year differs from their calendar year. So to make it easier for gaming operations to calculate their fees, it would provide for tribes, if they wanted to, to change the gaming operation's fiscal year.

It provides for a fee rate to be published on March 1st. We're hoping that by publishing the fee rate on March 1st, we'll have a more accurate fee rate.

And the other suggested change is to remove amortization from Section 514.1(b)(ii) to reflect

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existing practices. In our consultations with tribes and our comments from the public, we've received suggestions that removing amortization from that section is actually consistent with existing practices and isn't necessarily a substantive change.

So if there is -- if there is anyone that has concerns about that change, please let us know in the context of this conversation or during -- you can submit written comments to the Commission itself.

The proposed rule provides for quarterly payments, which is more consistent with the actual text of IGRA, and a notification period if the gaming operation changes its fiscal year, providing notice to NIGC just so that we know that you've made that change.

One of the substantive changes to the proposed -- or to the rule itself, to Part 514, is a new section providing for late payments prior to the issuance of a Notice of Violation. And so Section 514.9 establishes that late payment system, that payments are made within 90 days of when they were -- when they're due, and then the late payments are assessed a fee, depending on how late in time they are. And it's a percentage of what is due.

514.9 provides for appeals of the late payment assessment. And after 90 days, if -- if there is still

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nonpayment, then that constitutes a failure to pay an annual fee, which, at that point in time, the Commission -- or the Chair could move forward with a Notice of Violation and a civil fine assessment.

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So what we've heard from tribes and the public is that sometimes fee payments may be sent in late for issues beyond the control of the tribe, and that an NOV is obviously a serious step. And so this proposed change is to account for those situations where a tribe, for whatever reason, may be a little late in paying their fee but it doesn't result in an actual NOV.

Also, as I'm sure many of you are aware, NIGC processes fingerprints for tribes. And so this section, 514.15 through 514.17, clarifies our collection of fees process. And we'll publish our fee amount biannually. And that fee amount is just based on the cost of what the FBI charges us to process those fingerprints.

As I mentioned, the comment period closes next Monday. So please send any written comments in by next Monday.

MR. MATHERLY: Andrew Matherly. Can you hear me?

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Yes.

MR. MATHERLY: Andrew Matherly. One thing we want to comment on is the proposed rule, it talks about

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the statements for 30 -- or for 1 to 30 calendar days, it's goes up to ten percent of the amount of the fee.

The Spokane Tribe, we are were supportive of the proposed rule. The addition of the ticket system, what we comment on is the -- we've stated this before, is the penalty to start at one percent for statements or fees 1 to 30 days, calendar days, and up to two percent for statements or fees 31 to 60 calendar days, and five percent for statements or fees up to 61, and then from 61 to 90, up to 25 percent for a situation where statements or fees are over 91 days late. I just want to make that on record.

MR. ROBERTS: Okay. All right. We're move ahead to Part 523. This part, the Commission has proposed rescinding this part. This part only applies to tribal gaming ordinances that were enacted prior to January 22nd, 1993 and have not yet been submitted to NIGC for approval.

So we don't know of any tribal gaming ordinances out there that this part would apply to. you think you have an ordinance that was passed in 1993 that hasn't yet been approved by the Commission, please let us know. So we're taking comments on this until next Monday, as well.

Part 559, Facility License Notifications, this

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is a discussion draft. The Commission has circulated a discussion draft for comment to -- from tribes and the public. And in the discussion draft, it provides for a tribe to request an expedited review when a Facility License Notification is sent in.

And basically, what it attempts to do is there are certain times where a tribe will send us a Facility License Notification and will say, "We intend to open in 60 days. Can you please let us know if you have all the information that you need for Part 559?"

And what we have done in the past is, where we have that information and we can confirm that we have everything we need under Part 559, we'll send the tribe a letter. So this tries to incorporate that process through regulation.

The discussion draft provides for licenses to be sent to NIGC within 30 days of issuance. That is so we are able to track which facilities are actually open or not. Which facilities are licensed, I should say.

And then the other change in the draft is

559 -- the current regulations provide for tribes to

provide copies of -- or basically, a statement of all of
the laws and regulations that the tribe has in place to
adequately protect the environment, public health and
safety. And the discussion draft sets forth, rather

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than having tribes pull together all of that information, that the tribe attest that it has -- that the construction and maintenance of the facility and operation is conducted in a manner that adequately protects the environment, public health and safety.

One of the questions -- one of the other changes in the discussion draft is notice to NIGC when the license is terminated or expires, or if a facility closes permanently or for more than 180 days.

So what we've asked tribes about is what about these temporary closures or seasonal closures. And the discussion draft lays out 180 days, but we're seeking comment from tribes as to how long that temporary closure period should be where you won't have to provide notice. Notice is not required for seasonal closures. So that would be less than 180 days.

559.6 provides for additional information to be provided if requested by the Chair. It sets forth that electronic submissions are accepted. And we have closed the comment period on the discussion draft on June 17th, 2011. But if anyone is interested in the comments that the agency received in writing, they're all on our Web site, as well as the transcripts from that consultation period.

The last reg as part of the Group 1 is a Buy

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Indian regulation. We -- the Commission asks, as part of the Notice of Inquiry to tribes and the public as to what regulation they should look at, the Commission asks that we look at a Buy Indian regulation which would require NIGC to Buy Indian when purchasing goods, services supported by various sections within IGRA itself.

This would be a regulation that would, again, apply to NIGC. It wouldn't require tribes to Buy Indian, it would require NIGC to do so. And we're seeking comment on -- during the consultation process, some tribes have said, "Yeah, you should adopt a regulation doing this." Some tribes have said, "You should do quidance." Some tribes have said, you know, it doesn't -- the Commission should look at it.

So we have been taking more comment on that and would like any input tribes have on how the Commission should proceed with this, with whether they should proceed with a Buy Indian regulation.

And I'm going to turn it back over to the Chairwoman and open it up for comment.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Okay. So we've gone over Group 1, at least the PowerPoint presentation. We have one comment from Spokane regarding the percentages on late penalty assessments under 514. And I do want to

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- 1 | clarify, Andrew, if you don't mind.
- MR. MATHERLY: Okay.
- 3 CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: I got lost at the last
- 4 part. Your suggestion was, on 514, 514.9, one percent
- 5 for up to 30 days.
- 6 MR. MATHERLY: Yes.
- 7 CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: One to 30 days. Two
- 8 percent, 31 to 60 days.
- 9 MR. MATHERLY: Correct.
- 10 CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Five percent, 61 to 90
- 11 days.
- MR. MATHERLY: Yes.
- 13 CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: And then 91-plus days,
- 14 25 percent.
- MR. MATHERLY: Yes.
- 16 CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Do we have any other
- comments or questions about 514 and the notice of
- 18 | proposed rule? Yes, if you would pass the microphone
- 19 down.
- 20 MR. HANSON: Daniel Hanson, Port Gamble
- 21 | S'klallam Tribal Gaming.
- 22 A quick question regarding Part 514. I was
- 23 | wondering if there was -- any consideration has been
- 24 given to updating the definition of gross gaming
- 25 revenue? There is no specific examples of what is

includable and excludable.

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CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Actually, that's a very good question. I think we were going to talk about this in a minute, but I'll let Larry address that question, because we actually have been considering it for a while. And we'll give you the history on this.

MR. ROBERTS: We have been consulting with tribes on that issue, with the definition within IGRA itself. We're wondering from tribes how would you define it, would you define it consistent with GAAP, the definition within the statute itself, you know, how can the Commission move forward.

So the Commission is not proposing defining it at this point in time, but if you have suggestions on how the Commission should, we'd be happy to consider that.

MR. HANSON: I guess one thing I notice when I look at the definition is there hasn't been any, I guess, clear guidance on what exactly is includable and excludable. So not as far as defining it in the course of generally accepted accounting principles, but looking at what promotional activity can be deducted and what's included in the actual calculation when assessing fees.

MR. ROBERTS: Yes. And I think our audits division may have guidance on that itself. It's

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something that, if we don't have clear guidance on it, it's something that we should consider. I don't think we have anyone from audits here today.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: No, but generally what happens, our audit staff and our comptroller, interestingly, spent quite a bit of time on the phone helping in aiding tribes with their worksheets and what is or is not deductible.

I think -- and we were going to talk about this in a bit. What we have talked about is the definition of net revenue. And we decided not to talk about that or address that in regulation, because it is defined in the Act. But it doesn't necessarily talk about gross gaming revenue and promotions. But there certainly is a way for us to address that through guidance or through working regularly with staff at the NIGC, either in audits or our comptroller's office, who goes over and collects the worksheets and the fees.

MR. HOENIG: Also -- this is Michael Hoenig.

I think in the past when questions like this came up,

Joe Smith, the former director of audits, had some

guidance that he had put together. And I don't think it

ever went out as a bulletin, but I'd have to double

check on that. But I know that he would send guidance

out to people who asked about all different things that

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go into the calculation, things that are left out.

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And that's something that I think we've talked internally about putting up on the Web site at some point, too, but it's something I think we need to go through a little more, also, and especially if we're going to be making any changes to the fee regulation, make sure that everything is consistent.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: And we would certainly be open to hearing your tribe's comments on that that would inform how we would put a bulletin or a guidance out.

MS. HENRY: Hi, Tracie. Carol Henry from the Port Gamble S'klallam Tribe.

Actually, our CFO has been in contact with the audit department and has not been able to get a clear definition for what can be included and excluded. So it's a little frustrating out there, especially for regulators, to try to supply help, too. So if some concrete guidelines could be provided.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Thank you for letting us know that. We'll certainly address that with our staff and inform tribes so we can put information out there that's consistent.

So I don't know if you want to add anything to that, Larry, but that's good to know. We need to know if you're not getting clear messages from our divisions.

Do we have any other comments? We certainly have a number of parts here that we can talk about. on fees, any input that you can give on how this might affect your tribe?

One of the reasons, just some background, we wanted to address the late fees, the majority of the NOVs that are on the books at the NIGC, like 66 percent of them, are for late fees. NOVs are substantial violations, and tribes take them seriously, and anybody you try to do business with takes them very seriously.

And in discussing this with our comptroller, in discussing this with him, what he has found is that in most cases, it is not willful noncompliance to pay There is usually some reason why that is out of the control of the tribe. A change in personnel is the number one reason, not knowing how to go through the worksheets with this new person or the absence of that person for some reason. That's the main reason that we've heard. And he is always working with tribes in getting this -- any new personnel up to speed on the worksheet and how to calculate.

The second reason has usually to do with closures or natural disasters, things that were out of their control.

So we wanted to look at this in another way.

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There is plenty of other ways that we see how late payments or anything that you owe money on manifests itself. And in looking at other independent federal regulatory agencies, they do have these systems in place. So this is a new concept. And it becomes incremental with the last step. If noncompliance and fees were just never paid, then there can be the action of an NOV. But we do want to try to address problems before they escalate to a very substantial black mark on the tribe's record.

Well, we've had one comment on the percentages. Do we have any other comments on the percentages?

And I apologize if you do not -- I apologize. The draft that you have on facility -- I'll get to that in a minute. I apologize. We'll talk about that in a minute.

If there aren't any more comments on 514 -
MR. ROBERTS: I just want to follow up on the

comment about gross gaming revenue. You know, one of

the things that the Commission put out in its -- in the

proposed rule making about fees itself is the statutory

language in IGRA defines gross gaming revenue in such a

way that it doesn't clearly speak to promotions.

And so we would really welcome any comment

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that tribes would have in terms of how the Commission itself could interpret the statutory language to clarify those sort of things, because the statutory language itself, basically, provides for -- defines gross gaming revenue as the total amount of money wagered less any amounts paid out for prizes and paid for prizes awarded.

And so that's in 2717(c) -- I'm sorry, 2717(a)(6).

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Any comments on 559 on facility license? The one that's in the draft form, I do want to apologize on that. The draft you have does not have the 180 days inserted on 559.5. But that's what we're thinking, is six months, based on our discussions on the road. So it's on the flip side of this colorful draft you have. It's a two-pager on one page.

The main departure on this particular regulation is the amount of records or duplication that the tribe has to go through to submit facility licensing. And so that has been taken out and replaced with an attestation from the tribal government that public health and safety is adequately protected.

MS. HELM: Linda Helm of Port Gamble S'klallam TGA.

Would I be correct in assuming if you're

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expanding your facility, you would not need to treat it as if it were a new facility and notify the NIGC that you're opening it?

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MR. ROBERTS: If you're just expanding, if it's under -- if it's all connected in one place as opposed to like a separate parcel, a separate facility, then it would just be one license.

MS. HELM: What if it's just connected by a breezeway?

MR. ROBERTS: I think it's something we want to talk about. And I think it's going to depend on the specifics of the situation itself.

And so, you know, I think, generally, we'd want to know the tribe's views on whether, you know, it's one facility. It sounds like it's sort of -- the breezeway, it sounds like tax-exempt issues there with the IRS and that sort of thing. But for the facility license stuff, I think we'd like to talk with you.

Melissa Schlichting is the regional attorney here. I don't know if you've had any contact with her at all, but she would be the first point of contact there.

MS. HELM: Could you spell her last name?

MR. ROBERTS: I'll just give you her contact information at the break, if that's okay.

MS. HELM: Sure.

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MR. MATHERLY: Spokane Tribe, Andrew Matherly. Can you hear me?

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The comment I have on the Facility License

Notification or even the renewal process, it doesn't

outline in here whether a tribe does it in one year or

two years, correct?

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Right. We've left that to the tribe, to determine how long their licenses are and when they terminate and when they renew. So the way this is laid out, you would need to tell us if they've renewed or they've expired or you've terminated them or you've suspended them, rather than us saying it's three years.

MR. MATHERLY: So just as long as we're within the 30 days of issuance of a renewed license?

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Yes.

MR. MATHERLY: The other question is is there a generalized checklist that the NIGC is going to utilize when they discuss the health and environmental stuff, protecting the health and safety?

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: We would certainly -- go ahead. We would certainly consider that, if that would be helpful. And certainly we would have to put out some guidance when new regs come out, especially when there is a departure from, you know, what has been submitted

previously.

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MR. ROBERTS: The regs right now lay out a list of different criteria. The discussion draft proposes that the tribe just attests to that as opposed to sending in all that information itself.

MR. MATHERLY: Okay. One thing that's helpful -- because with the Spokane Tribe we have a tribal-state compact with the State of Washington. They also have their health and safety. It's kind of broad stuff in our tribal-state compact. We just want to be on the same page, I guess, with both entities so that one isn't saying that you've got to follow the Uniform Building Code and the other one is following a different code. Our tribes adopted the code they're going to use, and we just don't want to conflict and be out of compliance with the checklist or anything.

So I think it would be helpful, if there is new checklists, if they could be forwarded to the tribe. You know, we've used them in the past to generalize, assist us to keep us in compliance. And from experience with NIGC, not this administration, many years ago, NIGC would have the checklist but they wouldn't let the tribes see it.

There was one moment when we actually -- they said we can look at it, so I handed the checklist to the

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director as we're walking through the facility. So it's a tool for us if we could see the information to incorporate what needs to be done. So I haven't seen that with this administration.

And I also want to applaud this Commission for listening to the tribes, having this opportunity and these consultations and this rule making and making a change. So thank you.

MR. ROBERTS: Thank you. We appreciate that comment.

One of the things that would be helpful to know is what we've received. We've received similar comments to yours from other tribes, basically saying that our compacts already deal with health and safety issues and that this is really a duplicative issue or duplicative requirement and we think it could be streamlined and made better.

So the Commission, I think, is, in terms of any comments that tribes have with regard to how -- how the facility licensing process has worked specifically with the public health and safety and how that can be strengthened and improved and streamlined, if necessary, you know, reducing paperwork for tribes, we would greatly appreciate those comments. So thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Okay. And one of the

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other things I want to talk about is, and actually, you know, Andrew had -- there were two things, but Andrew opened up the one about when the renewals are and clarifying that it's subject to the tribe's consideration or gaming ordinances. But the other thing is the temporary closures. I know Spokane closes during the winter months, and other tribes do the same thing. They're seasonal, whether it's winter or summer.

But also, the other thing that we've been seeing, unfortunately, for some tribes in other parts of the country is that they have been forced to close because of natural disasters, flooding or tornadoes, fires, and then, of course, expansions or remodels, and when is "temporary" temporary.

And we do want to draw a line in the sand on, you know, it gets to be too much time, where you don't have to renew a license or notify us. That it's, you know, just temporary and not to exceed a certain amount of time is 180 days -- what we were hearing is 180 days, six months. You know, that works. But if you have any comments on that, we'd like to hear them.

This is well-trod ground. We've been working on this for a while, so I understand there may not be a lot of comments.

If there is not anything else on 559, I do

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want to just quickly talk about Buy Indian and I want to clarify again that this is not something that we're suggesting that we impose on tribes, because we're not able to. But this is a policy that we would like to adopt for the agencies, the federal agency that does business with Indians and only Indians. Our authority is with tribes. And we thought it would be a good practice.

It's something that happens over at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, it's something that happens at Indian Health Service. There is two authorities. One is under the Buy Indian Act, the other one is within IGRA. And it's mentioned in your PowerPoint.

So when we go out and, for example, when we hold these consultations, we're at an Indian facility. And to try to keep with the spirit of the purposes of IGRA, which is to promote economic development in the Indian country and support economic growth of tribes, we believe that it's appropriate for this agency to solicit services and products from Indian country, as we know more and more native vendors exist out there that we certainly could use.

We're looking at how we could structure this, both in terms of which authority to use or both, either under the Indian -- Buy Indian Act or under IGRA, and

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whether it should be a policy, internal policy or a regulation.

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So again, I want to be clear, I'm not saying the tribes need to do this. This is something that we're looking at imposing on the agency itself.

Okay. Did we -- do you want to go on to the next part, which is proceedings before the Commission? Do you want to take a quick break first, a quick telephone, coffee, restroom break and then we can come back and go right at this really exciting section of proceedings before the Commission?

How many attorneys are here? Two. Four. So let's take a quick 15-minute break, we'll come back at 10:15, and we'll start on the next section.

(Recess taken.)

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Okay. If everyone could take their seats.

So let's go to the next part of the morning on Group 2. We're going to talk about Part 573 and enforcement, and a new chapter, which would be subchapter H, under proceedings before the Commission.

So I'll turn it over to Larry to talk about that point.

MR. ROBERTS: Okay. So we'll start with

Part 573. Earlier this year, the Commission circulated

a discussion draft. One of the things that the

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Commission had heard from tribes during the Notice of Inquiry and just since the time that they've been here is that sometimes tribes would receive a Notice of Violation and they would be completely surprised by it. And what the Chairwoman and this Commission has been very clear about is that their approach to regulating the industry is to basically assist tribes to try to achieve compliance, and only if compliance efforts are not successful, proceed with an enforcement action. And so that an enforcement action should never come as a surprise to a tribe, because the Commission should be working with the tribe to achieve compliance at the outset, and then if compliance isn't successful, then an NOV.

So what this Part 573 discussion draft lays out is sort of that pre-enforcement action, if there are concerns by the Commission, that a letter of concern go out to the tribe that provides sort of here are some issues that we see, there are maybe some noncompliance issues. It can indicate an incident or condition that may be a violation, and it confirms sort of what the notice would provide, that this is NIGC's view, here are some necessary corrective action, and engaging in a dialogue with the tribe and the regulatory body at the outset to see how the issue can be addressed.

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This pre-enforcement action process that's laid out in the discussion draft makes it clear that it's not a final agency action, that the compliant -- the letter or the notice would provide some sort of time period to achieve voluntary compliance. And then what the discussion draft lays out is if corrective action isn't completed, that an enforcement action could be taken.

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The discussion draft also lays out that there may be circumstances where the Chair may not -- may need to act sooner and may have to issue an actual Notice of Violation if it's some sort of, depending on the situation, some sort of exigent situation.

So that's the discussion draft that's been circulated. If there are any comments on Part 573 and the discussion draft, the Commission has not yet moved forward with the proposed rule, at this point, but certainly would welcome any comments.

MS. HELM: Linda Helm, Port Gamble TGA.

I would request that not only the tribe be notified but also the regulatory body. I know in the past we haven't always been -- the information hasn't been communicated to the regulatory agency. And so I'd just like to ensure that we receive it, as well.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Thank you, Linda. That's

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actually an issue that we've been talking about actually since we first came into office, about who we should be communicating with. And we've -- not just in terms of these policy discussions here with regard to consultation, where we're try to cast a very broad net, but who at the tribe specifically.

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We deal with tribal governments, and that's who -- that's the body and the entity that we're authorized under the Act to deal with. And so we do need to send it to the tribe itself. But we also understand that the tribe receives quite a bit of information and, for whatever reason, that may not get communicated.

What I did hear previously from tribal leaders, because there is a flip side to that, that if, you know, we were just sending it to the regulatory body, then the tribal government had no idea what was happening. And it's really their prerogative to know as the governing body of the tribe.

So we are trying to send them to both. If I look at Larry and Mike, we try to send them to both now. But certainly we need to do the best that we can to make sure that both bodies know. It's a good point. Thank you.

Any other comments on 573? This, again,

reiterating what Larry had said, this is our effort to assist tribes to come to compliance before an enforcement action. And NOVs are serious and they shouldn't be a surprise. And we want to do what we can to work with tribes to bring them into compliance. And that may come in the form of training and technical assistance, which we offer quite a bit, individualized guidance for the tribe. And this is just our way of making more concrete our effort to remedy situations. Rather than escalate to NOV, we want to de-escalate.

> MS. HELM: That's appreciated.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: And I know many tribes already do this. They have it in their own gaming ordinances or in their own controls that are above and beyond what's required by the NIGC as an incremental step process to bring the operations into compliance. So I know for many of you it's not new.

We will talk later, this is the front end, on NOVs. There is another section we're going to talk about on -- later in our discussion today about what happens at the back end of an investigation, again, making an effort to notify in advance that there is a problem, and also we'll talk about how we close those out later on.

> If there are no other comments on 573, Okay.

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we're -- like Larry said, the comments on this discussion draft closed a while ago, but we've been working on putting out, possibly soon I hope, a notice of proposed rule that encompasses the comments that we received on the discussion draft soon.

You ready? We'll go into the great world of proceedings before the Commission. I'm just building it up. It's exciting.

MR. ROBERTS: Okay, proceedings before the Commission. In your packet of materials, what is probably the thickest draft here is a new subchapter H, "Proceedings before the Commission." What we've tried to do is consolidate a number of different parts into a new subchapter so that, you know, each -- each part, like approval of ordinances and approval of management contracts, have their own appeals rules and you don't have to go back and forth between different parts. This would organize it all in one subchapter. So the subchapter is organized where there is general rules of application of proceedings before the Commission. And it, you know, goes through things such as definitions.

Then Part 581 is motions and appellate proceedings before the Commission, laying out the process of how to file motions in appellate proceedings before the Commission.

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Part 582 lays out appeals of disapprovals of gaming ordinances. Part 583 in the draft would cover approvals or disapprovals of management contracts, appeals of those. Part 584 would be appeals before a presiding official of a Notice of Violation, proposed civil fine assessments. And then Part 585 is actually -- covers appeals before the Commission on written submissions, where there is not a presiding official, for example.

So basically, I guess let me step back and say that when we started with the Commission, in going through the Notice of Inquiry and talking with staff on what regulations should be addressed by the Commission, a lot of folks in the Office of General Counsel said, you know, it would be nice to have these all organized in one subchapter that you can go to. And there are a lot of issues that may not be all that exciting in your day-to-day activities, but once you're in an appeal, we don't really have set forth in regs all of the questions that have come up over the course of the existence of the agency, in terms of how to handle appeals.

And so what we've tried to do is clean up our appeals process quite a bit and try to have -- fill in those basic steps and provide guidance to tribal gaming commissions, tribes, attorneys in how appeals before the

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Commission would be handled so you don't have to pick up the phone all the time with someone in the Office of General Counsel and say, "Well, how do I file a motion before the Commission?" It's right here in this proposed subchapter.

So Part 580 is, like I said, basic issues such as definitions, how the Commission will go about addressing either a suspension, revocation, amendment or waiver of rules, who may appear before the Commission, how service is effectuated, and how the Commission may handle ex parte communications. And we have received quite a few comments on the discussion draft with regard to ex parte communications.

And so I think what the Commission is doing now is we've compiled a lot of the information on the discussion draft, and the Commission is evaluating how to move forward with a proposed rule. And so all of these issues, again, if you didn't have an opportunity to comment on the discussion draft, the proposed rule would go out and, more likely than not, you'll have 60 days to provide comments on the proposed rule. And we would encourage everyone to do so.

Part 581 is the motions practice on proceedings before the Commission. So motion for limited participation in ordinance appeals, how to

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effectuate motions to intervene and appeal before a residing official, how to file motions for the written submissions. Basically, Part 581 encapsulates all of the general procedural rules for filing a motion, including motions for reconsideration and motions to supplement the record.

Part 582 relates to approvals -- or disapprovals, I should say, of ordinances, resolutions or amendments to gaming ordinances, who may appeal the disapproval, how to appeal that disapproval, what happens if there is a late filing or a failure to file an appeal, again, motions for limited participation, the standard of review that will be applied on an appeal of a disapproval, the decision, and then making clear when final agency action occurs.

The same thing with Part 583 for management contracts. Again, just setting forth the process, who may appeal, how to appeal, dealing with late filings, failure to file, motions for limited participation, again, the standard of review that would be applied, decision, and when final agency action occurs. So this basically lays out the entire process for approvals or disapprovals of management contracts or amendments thereto.

Part 584, so appeals before a presiding

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official of a Notice of Violation. So our process basically provides if the tribe receives a Notice of Violation, the tribe can choose to go before a presiding official. And so this lays out that process of when an appeal is before a presiding official, how that appeal -- basically, all of the process issues; how to appeal, motions, motions for limited participation, who has the burden of proof, and when the hearing will be held for the presiding official, the hearing process and also the decision, the timing, content, and the final agency action itself.

Most of the appeals before the Commission are handled on written submissions. And so Part 585 controls when it's just, you know, briefs and written submissions. Again, the process for appeals.

So what we've -- what we've been doing through consultations is I think a lot of the comments that we received from tribes have been written comments on the discussion draft, because, obviously, as you can tell, these rules here lend themselves to a back-and-forth, engaging conversation here. But if you have any -- so what we've been asking folks to do is to -- you know, if you want to take the preliminary draft back to in-house counsel and have them comment on it, or obviously if you have comments today, that would be great, as well. But

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it's basically trying to put all of our different procedural rules in one subchapter so that it's more user friendly.

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CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: You wouldn't believe how excited our attorneys were when we -- see, he's really excited.

You know, the regulations have been in place for some time now and they've been out, you know, operating with them. And naturally, you find out what works and what doesn't work, not just from the tribe's side, which we've -- you know, it's been brought to our attention, but what works within the agency and what can make an appeal process easier or more difficult or clearer or lacking clarity.

So we had -- you know, and that included Larry and Mike over here, but a number of attorneys who said I have this wish list of things that if I could change the world, at least the NIGC world, you know, here is a list of things that would be helpful for us when we're handling appeals.

And of course, as you see here, there are a number of ways that -- number of actions that can be appealed. But we wanted to create some consistency, where applicable, in the appeal process and make it clearer to both those who are appealing, the parties

involved in appealing, any people that might be interested parties, or to, more importantly, presiding officials, because they're the ones who are going to use these rules to conduct the appeals, should there be a presiding officer, so everybody knows the rules of the road and that they're clear.

Again, feel free to bring this draft to whomever you feel you need to, if you need to, and feel free to submit comments.

MR. ROBERTS: And just so you know, this draft has been -- the comment period on the draft closed in late August. And so this is one of those drafts that we've received comment on. We're now briefing the full Commission on a proposed regulation. And so I would hope that the Commission is going to move forward on a decision for a proposed regulation soon. So I would just keep an eye out for that. That might be -- that will be a very good time to comment on it, during that 60-day comment period.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Okay. If there are no comments or further comments on that, what we can do is move on to Group 4, that's the afternoon session, if you all don't mind. And we can talk about -- that's the 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. on the agenda, 556, 558, 571 and 537. If we throw some letters in there, we might be playing

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Okay. So, Larry, do you want to start on Group 4, start on the pilot program?

MR. ROBERTS: Yes. So the pilot program, what we've heard through consultations and staff and just meeting with tribes is that most tribes are operating under a pilot program that NIGC utilizes, where tribes submit a notice of results of their investigations for primary management officials and key employees. And they maintain the applications and the investigative reports. And the Commission has heard pretty uniformly that formalizing this pilot program, which a number of tribes use, that that should be formalized in either a regulation or a policy.

And so what the discussion draft in your materials does is it seeks to formalize this pilot program through regulation. So Part 556 includes all the procedures before a gaming license is issued, and 558 addresses the procedures after a gaming license is issued.

And so one of the things that we have been requesting through consultations and public comment is what we've learned is that some regions may have implemented the pilot program a little bit differently from region to region. So what this discussion draft

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attempts to do is provide some uniformity across all the regions. So if there is anything in the discussion draft that looks a little bit different or not something that you're used to in part of the pilot program, I think we'd like to know that.

I also think that this is one of the drafts that the Commission has -- obviously, the comment period on the preliminary draft is already closed. So it's something that, again, the Commission is looking at, all those comments that we had received on the discussion draft, and hopes to move forward making a decision on a proposed rule shortly.

So 558 includes all the procedures after a gaming license is issued. So after the notice of results, the tribe may license the key employee or primary management official. The tribe notifies NIGC within 30 days. NIGC has 30 days to request additional information. If a license is issued prior to an objection by NIGC, then the licensee has a right to a notice and hearing. The license must be suspended during that hearing time. And then following the hearing, the tribe notifies NIGC of the tribe's decision on whether it's going to license that key employee or primary management official.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Again, I want to

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reiterate that these were broken up so that we have -it's clear what is required before and what happens and
what's required after. The pilot program has been in
place for some number of years, so it's not really
technically a pilot any more, and so we wanted to get
these into regulations and make clear what steps tribes
need to take and what our part will be.

The other thing that we're doing, just as an aside, once we get to a point of finalizing these, we will be creating some processes internally across the regions. We ask for the same information, but it may be in different forms that we ask tribes for information or the submittal process is -- might take on a certain form in other regions. And what we will do is, and have started to do this, is to create a consistent, across-the-board process throughout the country.

So it might look like there is a change in what we're asking for, when really it's just the form that we may be asking you for, in the form that it's in. So we want to do this so that we're one, we create consistency again, uniformity across the board. But also internally it helps us; should one region be overloaded, another region can help out with processing some of these applications. So if, for example, there is a very large facility opening in one area and there

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is a lot of people coming through, we can recruit some other regions to help another region out. And it's easier to do when there is uniformity.

MR. ROBERTS: One of the questions or issues that I'll raise in the discussion drafts for 556 and 558 is you'll notice on page 4 of 556 and under 556.4(b), it talks about if the tribe has submitted a notification of results of an individual seeking to be employed by another tribe and that second tribe has access to the investigative materials that that second tribe -- or if they received the investigative materials from NIGC, that second tribe can just update the investigation materials.

And in conjunction with 558.2 on page two -so this process, basically, provides if a tribe has
access to the investigative results of an earlier tribe,
they can just update that investigative report, if they
want to.

558, after a tribe is licensed, the Commission has put in its discussion draft for tribes, should they forward copies of the eligibility determination for someone who has not been licensed, should they forward that to NIGC for use by NIGC and other tribes. We've heard some tribes say, "Our investigative reports are ours, we don't want to share them with other entities,"

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and we've heard some tribes say, "Yes, that would be helpful to know if one tribe has decided not to license this individual, and having access to that report."

So it's just a -- it's a question out there, it's a discussion topic. We'd love to hear what tribes have to say on that and how the Commission may want to move forward in terms of making those types of reports available to other tribes.

Finally, some tribes have said during the consultation process that what we do is, when they fill out their application, we'll just pick up the phone and call that tribe where they've applied to earlier and talk directly with that tribal gaming commission.

> If there are no --Okav.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: I was going to say if there aren't any other comments, we can move on. Again, we are taking in all the comments that we have received since this particular -- these two particular parts were in discussion draft form, and we are working on a Notice of Proposed Rules. So please, again, keep your eye out for that in the near future.

MR. ROBERTS: Okay. Part 571, monitoring and investigations, this is something that the Chairwoman referenced earlier.

We have issued a Notice of Proposed Rule which

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provides for an investigation conclusion letter. we've heard, during the course of consultations, is that some tribes would say, "Well, we know -- NIGC told us three, four, five years ago that they opened up an investigation, but we never heard back from them. don't know if it's still open, if it's still ongoing, if it's been closed, you know, and we would like to have some feedback from NIGC."

So what this provides for in the proposed rule is that an authorized NIGC staff may advise a tribe or entity by letter that an investigation has been completed, and so providing some sort of feedback to that party. The proposed rule makes clear that the notification is not a finding that no violation had occurred, and it doesn't preclude the Chair from taking further action down the road.

But for example, an investigation may have been opened years ago, say, and the tribe is now looking to refinance some of its debt. And so a lender may say, "Well, is this an ongoing investigation or not?" NIGC staff may send out a letter saying, you know, that investigation has been completed. It clears the way for a tribe to accomplish its refinancing, in certain circumstances.

So the Notice of Proposed Rule making was

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published on October 12th, and that comment period closes next week.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Again, this was in response to what we were hearing from tribes in our initial discussions last year in our Notice of Inquiry, and consultations even prior to that, before we did our Notice of Inquiry over the summer of 2010.

And I actually, and the Commissioners did this, but we all do, even just last week I had a couple of tribes come to me and say, "Hey, there was this investigation going on. What are you doing? It's been going on for a long time, and I need to know are you going to do something or not?"

So it might have been years. And the one instance I'm thinking of right now, it's been years. And they're sort of in limbo. And especially if you're the regulatory body or you're the operations and you're holding these records and you don't know how long should I hang on to these or can I store them now, you know, what's happening. And it's just sort of this unknown hanging over you until you get some conclusions.

So we looked at other independent federal regulatory bodies and what do they do. And they do do closeout letters saying, "Hey, we looked into this. We're closing out this investigation, "but also with the

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understanding, too, preserving the authority of the NIGC, and the Chair specifically, that, should this come up again, we may have to reopen it.

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But that's the back end. Earlier we were talking about 573, about notice to tribes, that we're not going to surprise you with a Notice of Violation unless there are really exceptional circumstances.

Usually the tribes, we're in communication, our regional offices are in communication, so there is notice up front and there is notice on the end. So that's what we're looking to do in these two regulations.

Are there any comments from anyone on this particular part? Yes, Andrew.

MR. MATHERLY: Andrew Matherly, Spokane Tribe.

Spokane Tribe supports the 571 proposed rule. We just want to clarify the discussion draft, that the NIGC's authority to access records located off-site is unnecessary and support leaving it out of this part. I don't know that that will be with the paperwork reduction act or where it's actually listed in here, but just some comments that was put in our formal letter today.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Larry, Mike, do you remember comments on -- because we have talked about that over the past six months, about access to off-site

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records and what tribes have said about that and what we've determined.

MR. ROBERTS: Some tribes have basically said, similar to what Spokane had mentioned, which is, you know, we don't need -- we have that access already, we don't need to put it as part of a regulation.

I don't know off the top of my head the other comments we received, but it was pretty uniformly that NIGC already has access to those, so we don't need to spell those out even further in a regulation.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Okay. Any other comments on this part?

Okay. If not, we can move on to 537.

MR. ROBERTS: 537 is the part that applies to background investigations for persons or entities with financial interest in a management contract or having management responsibility in a management contract.

And what the discussion draft provides is for the Chair, in her discretion, to reduce the scope of information to be furnished for any tribe that's going to have a financial interest in a management contract or management responsibility in it, or an institutional investor that is already federally regulated or is required to undergo a background investigation and licensure by a state or tribe pursuant to a tribal-state

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So I think the discussion draft's intent is to, where there are already reviews in place, that it be streamlined for those entities or the Chair may streamline it, if she so desires, for those background investigations and information for those entities. And that is the primary change in the discussion draft.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Any comments on 537, which is those two sections on page -- oh, there is not a page, numbers on the page here. Page one and four.

If not, we can go on to the next section, which is our notice of no action. And I'll let Larry talk about that.

MR. ROBERTS: So as part of the regulatory review process, the Commission asked a number of different questions in the Notice of Inquiry, trying to frame how they were going to move forward with the review of regulations, asking again, as I said earlier, which regulations should be reviewed, in what order, and what issues should the Commission be looking at as part of the regulatory review process.

So one of the questions that we heard in response to the Notice of Inquiry was some tribes saying that NIGC should review and approve agreements collateral to a management contract. And some comments

we received is that NIGC should define net revenues.

What the Commission published on October 12th is a summary of those comments that they received and an explanation as to why they're not moving forward with collateral agreements and a net revenues definition as part of its regulatory review process.

Basically, tribes often do and can provide collateral agreements to a management agreement for NIGC to review, but the statute provides only for NIGC to approve or disapprove actual management contracts.

And then with regard to the net revenues definition, the Commission, after receiving the comments, agreed with those that thought that a GAAP definition of net revenues could be inconsistent with the statutory definition of net revenues, so it decided not to move forward with changing or modifying a net revenues definition because we're limited by what the statute provides.

So this is -- you know, this is, I guess, along the lines of what the Commission was saying, was that, you know, we're going to -- the Commission is going to be transparent and let folks know why the Commission has decided to move forward or not based on the comments they receive from the public on various issues. So this is one of the issues that they've set

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forth, that they're not going to move forward on these two issues.

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CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Okay. Does anyone need any more coffee? We've talked to everyone so much that you all know what we're doing. So this is more evidence of that. You know, when we started talking about these two subjects, then we said, considering the comments that we've received, okay, that's enough talking about this, we're not going to do anything.

If it's okay with the group, we can move on to the last part of the agenda, Group 5, on the self regulation regulation of Class II gaming, and also on sole proprietary interest.

MR. ROBERTS: Okay. So for Part 518, and you should have in your materials --

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Find this section.

MR. ROBERTS: -- a preliminary discussion draft. Again, this is something that the Commission circulated for comment. The comment period has closed on this discussion draft, and the Commission is now in the process of reviewing all the comments and deciding how to move forward with the Class II self regulation reg.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Can I stop you for a second?

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MR. ROBERTS: Yes.

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CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Excuse me. I'm sorry,
Larry. There are two versions in this packet. The
first one shows the deletions in bubbles. That goes
through twelve pages. And then the second part of that
are the strike-throughs and the insertions and no
bubbles.

We do this because we have limited technological ability right at the moment at the NIGC and our version of Word.

So for those of you, like me, who hate deletions and bubbles, I made them make two copies. But you miss the comments if you get rid of the bubbles. The second one is the insertions and the strike-throughs, the deletions.

So whatever is your preference in reading, just so you know, you're looking at the same thing, they are the same thing, two different versions. That's all I wanted to tell folks while they're looking through this.

MR. ROBERTS: Okay. So for the Class II self regulation, basically in the Notice of Inquiry, when we were asking tribes should the Commission look at the Class II self regulation reg, some of the comments we received from tribes is that the administrative burden

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of actually receiving the self regulation certificate outweighs the benefits obtained, that the process itself laid out in Part 518, the requirements are duplicative and burdensome, that the petition to be a self regulating tribe and then the annual reporting requirements undermine the whole purpose of the certification. Some tribes commented that obviously that high standards of self reg, becoming a self regulating tribe for Class II purposes should be maintained, and a number of tribes commented on how a Class II self regulation certification is a hallmark of tribal sovereignty.

So after receiving the comments on the Notice of Inquiry, the Commission decided to move forward with a discussion draft, which everyone has in their materials. This is a discussion draft. The due date for written comments closed on September 17th. The Commission is reviewing those comments and is in the decision-making process now of how to move forward, if at all, with a proposed regulation.

What the discussion draft attempted to do or attempts to do is shift the focus of 518 from the actual operation itself and more to the tribal regulatory agency, so looking at how the regulatory -- tribal regulatory agency itself functions. It attempts to

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reduce the submission of duplicative information and really attempts to streamline the process, maintaining high standards, but also making it something that certification -- all tribes I think now -- we only have two tribes that have a self regulation certification, a third by statute. But two tribes have a certification. And so what the Commission wanted to do is try to make a -- put in place a process where more tribes are achieving Class II certification.

So the submission requirements, we can just sort of go through this, this discussion draft, it has, under Part 518.3, the summary of the history of gaming operations, how the TGRA -- their organizational chart, the employment criteria for regulators, all of the information that would be provided as part of the self regulation certification. A funding description, a list of the current regulators, and a description of the gaming operation's accounting system, a listing of internal controls, description of the recordkeeping system, a copy of the facility license, and any additional tribal gaming regulations.

518.4 lays out the criteria that must be met, that the tribe maintains effective and honest accounting of revenues, reputation for a fair, safe and honest operation, that it operates on a fiscally and

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economically sound basis, and generally free of any dishonest or criminal activity, and that Class II gaming has been conducted in compliance with federal and tribal laws and regulations.

518.4, the other criteria, that the tribe has an adequate system for accounting of revenues, that the tribe has an adequate system for investigation, licensing and monitoring of employees, and an adequate system in place for investigation, enforcement and prosecution of violations.

that it met those criteria, and lays forth, basically, different criteria that you can use to illustrate that you're meeting those requirements; adequate dispute resolution process, adequate system for accounting of gaming revenues, can illustrate that the tribal gaming regulatory body monitors compliance with laws and regulations, including MICS, monitors the effectiveness, that the TGRA audits Class II gaming activities, and that it reviews the accounting information, that the regulatory body has access to all records, adequate investigation, licensing and monitoring system, established standards for vendors, that it establishes and posts the game rules, that it takes appropriate enforcement actions, that it takes testimony and

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conducts hearings, it can also illustrate that the tribe adequately permanently funds the TGRA, that it's adopted a system for adequate prosecution, that it can demonstrate that the operation is conducted in a manner that protects the environment, public health and safety.

And then Section 518.5 lays out the process for reviewing petitions. And so within NIGC, the Office of Self Regulation will make an initial determination within 120 days, that it will issue a report of its findings, and that it will issue a certificate of self regulation or notify the tribe if it does not meet the criteria. And if the tribe doesn't meet the criteria, then it may respond to the report and include additional information. It can request a hearing. The Office of Self Regulation would issue a decision on the petition itself, and then the decision to deny self regulation would be appealable to the full Commission.

And then the discussion draft for annual reporting requirements, 518.7, there are some changes here, and they're based on the text of IGRA itself.

Annual reporting requirements, that there be an independent audit. And this is where the IGRA itself provides for a resume of all PMOs and all key employees hired and licensed by the tribe after receiving a certificate of self regulation.

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And then Part 518.8 provides that the tribe has a continuing duty to inform the Commission of any change in circumstances material to the approval of self regulation.

And then 518.9 basically summarizes what powers are limited during self regulation by NIGC.

This, again, drafts the statutory language of IGRA.

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518.9 makes clear that the Commission retains all other powers, and powers to bring enforcement actions for violation of IGRA, NIGC regulations and tribal gaming ordinances.

Again, this is something where we have received a lot of comments on it, as I've mentioned. The Commission is right now reconciling those comments, looking at those comments, considering them, and deciding how to move forward with a proposed rule making.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Are there any comments on 518, the discussion draft?

MR. ROBERTS: Okay. Well, the last part of Group 5 is sole proprietary interests. As part of its regulatory review, the Commission asked whether it should consider promulgating a regulation defining sole proprietary interests, whether it should provide a regulatory process by which a tribe could request a

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Some comments that we received in response to the Notice of Inquiry is that the Commission should promulgate a regulation, but that review by the Commission should only be had at the request of the tribe.

Some comments suggested that sole proprietary interests should be defined using the percentages set forth in IGRA, in terms of what is an appropriate percentage for a management contract or for an individually licensed gaming operation.

Some comments suggested that if we -- if the Commission decides to move forward and defines sole proprietary interest through regulation, it should also define what primary beneficiary means, as used in the statute.

Some comments suggested that, because sole proprietary interest has been addressed through Notices of Violation and legal opinions, that a definition through regulation may provide stability and access to financing by just providing a clear statement in the regulation.

Some comments suggested just the opposite, that a clear statement in a regulation could actually limit access to capital and affect business decisions that the tribe has already made.

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Some comments suggested that NIGC should not define it by regulation, it should proceed with its approach through Notices of Violation and legal opinions, and that really the definition of this should be left to the courts to decide.

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So what the Commission has done is they've decided to continue to consult on sole proprietary interest. We have not yet circulated a preliminary discussion draft for comment. I think the Commission decided that they wanted to get more views of tribes through consultation before going forward with either a preliminary discussion draft or a proposed rule.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Larry, how many opinions do we have?

MR. HOENIG: Finished or in the works?

MR. ROBERTS: I think in terms of Office of

General Counsel opinions for sole proprietary interest,

it's probably in the range of I want to say around 50,

probably 50 opinions over the course of the last -
somewhere around that range.

There has been I want to say maybe three or four Notices of Violation, where it's not just a legal opinion, it's the chair of the agency taking action and issuing an NOV defining sole proprietary interest under those specific facts.

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Some of the questions or comments we've received as part of sole proprietary interest is because it is so fact specific, is it something that lends itself to a reg or should the Commission proceed on a case-by-case approach.

CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: What I find really interesting is that -- well, not surprisingly, tribes are on different sides of this issue. That's normal in Indian country, where, you know, as Larry mentioned, in our comments that we received, tribes are either for it or they're against it.

And as time has gone on, and I'm certain that Mike in particular, not that I'm going to ask you to, but knows from his time at the agency that management contracts and lending agreements and development agreements have become much more complex and creative, and lends to the idea that it is very case-by-case, fact specific, depending on how these are constructed. And you know, can we, with specificity, define sole proprietary interest or are there general terms that we might be able to put out there.

I think what we're hearing are the specifics can be very difficult, but could there be an option for generalities, just -- you know, we want to know what could or couldn't work, either in a reg or in some other

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fashion, because, like I said, tribes are on different sides of this. They'll come to us and say, "Hey," after the fact, "we believe there has been, you know, violation, we need your help," or, "We're going into some sort of an agreement, and what are NIGC's views before we enter into these agreements? What's sole proprietary interest? And what's a bad deal?" We don't want to get into the bad deal part of it.

Do you guys have anything that you wanted to --

MR. ROBERTS: No. If you haven't had a chance to submit comments, I think that this is something that -- and I hear this a lot from transactional attorneys, where they are saying, you know, we've gone through the Office of General Counsel legal opinions, we've looked at the Notices of Violation, we see a consistent thread here. Is it something that you guys -- we think you should move forward with the regulation to provide more clarity.

I think, because the Commission is interested in hearing more comments, it is an opportunity to hear more. Does this arise in your day-to-day workings? Is it providing barriers to financing by not having a regulation out there? Or is it something that is working on the case-by-case situations? So any comments

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would be appreciated.

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CHAIRWOMAN STEVENS: Absent any comments on that, I do want to go back over the agenda for those who may have just arrived. We've gone through the entire agenda in a matter of two hours. And I think that just speaks to the frequency in which the NIGC has been communicating with tribes for the past year, year and a half, that none of this is a surprise, much of this is — all of these parts have given tribes the opportunity to weigh in, provide input to these drafts. And for those that are in the official rule-making process now, you'll see all of these discussions over the past year have been influenced by tribal input through these consultations.

We covered a lot of ground today. Is there anyone that wants to rewind and go back to other parts? Maybe something has occurred to you over the other parts that we covered this morning, earlier this morning. Any questions you have about the process? Any comments on the process?

We originally started out with many more consultations and ended up canceling a number of them just because we were getting such good feedback and at the request of the tribes to slow down. And so we are. And many tribes, the transcriptionist part of this is

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proving to be useful for those people who cannot come and attend in person, they can track what's happening and have the opportunity to know what's happening in these meetings that they're not able to attend to inform their comments to the NIGC. I think it's important that tribes can hear what other tribes have to say to find common ground, to hear how differently a proposed reg might affect one tribe as opposed to another tribe and sit in this arena and come up with solutions together.

So again, another opportunity, if anyone has any comments on the substantive part of what we're talking about, or the process.

If not, we will have, as we mentioned throughout this morning, a number of additional notices of proposed rule coming out in the next -- in the near future. Lael is happy as a camper over there. will come out in the near future. I don't want to commit to a time, because you never know what snafu we will run into in the printing office and how we get these out.

So it should be within the next few weeks, I would imagine, on a number of these. Some others may take a bit longer. If you've not commented, feel free to submit comments.

Again, the deadline on the notices of proposed

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rule that are published now is December 12th. That's next week. If you haven't submitted comments, please do. If you have comments, please watch the Federal Register. And we will also put notice out, as we have been when we do put something in the register, to tribes letting them know that we've posted the proposed rule, much of which you've already seen here in some form or another.

So last call.

Okay. Well, thank you very much for attending this morning. We look forward to your comments and your continued participation. And safe travels from wherever you might have come in from, and we appreciate your time and attention. Thank you.

(Consultation ended at 11:30 a.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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I, CHERYL L. O'HALECK, the undersigned Certified Court Reporter, pursuant to RCW 5.28.010, authorized to administer oaths and affirmations in and for the State of Washington, do hereby certify:

7 That the proceedings, a transcript of which is attached, was given before me at the time and place 8 9 stated therein; that the proceedings were by me 10 stenographically recorded and transcribed under my 11 supervision, to the best of my ability; that the 12 foregoing transcript contains a full, true, and accurate 13 record of all the proceedings given and occurring at the 14 time and place stated in the transcript; that I am in no 15 way related to any party to the matter, nor to any 16 counsel, nor do I have any financial interest in the 17 event of the cause.

WITNESS MY HAND AND DIGITAL SIGNATURE THIS 8TH day of DECEMBER, 2011.

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