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1	Before the
2	NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION
3	Regulatory Review, Tribal Consultation
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6	Thursday, July 28th, 2011
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8	Department of Interior, South Auditorium
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24	Reported by:
25	CHARLES D. HOFFMAN

(9:15 a.m.)

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## **PROCEEDINGS**

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MS. COCHRAN: Good morning. I think we're going to go ahead and get started, it's about 9:15. Well, welcome to D.C. and some incredible heat. I'm glad that you're here today. I know that your time here with NIGA during their legislative summit is a very busy one, and so, we always appreciate the time that they are willing to give to us. We try to coordinate things so that we take advantage of your travel schedules because we know it's expensive to travel. So, thank you for joining us.

My name is Steffani Cochran. For those of you who I don't know, I am the vice chairwoman of the National Indian Gaming Commission, and I am a member of the Chickasaw Nation. I was born and raised in Oklahoma, but home for me is actually in the Pueblos in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I miss my home right now, terribly. So, welcome and thank you for joining us this morning. We do have a pretty busy agenda and will try to get through as much as we can, maybe even perhaps get you out a little bit earlier.

The chairwoman, as you know, is going to be before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs today, testifying. And so, she's not going to be joining

us. Commissioner Little will be with her. He is our republican Commissioner, and so it's important that he be present, and so I have agreed to take on the consultations. And they wish us very well.

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On behalf of my fellow Commissioners, thank you again for joining us. Councilmember Litenger has agreed to open our meeting this morning, and thank you so much for accepting that offer. For those of you who may not know her, she is secretary of USET, and has been on your council three years, I believe. Eight years, three terms. I knew I had read something. So, thank you for coming to open up our meetings. We do ask at every meeting that it be opened properly, so that we have a good start. So councilwoman, I'll turn it over to you.

MS. LITENGER: Good morning, everyone. (WHEREUPON, a Native American prayer was recited.)

We ask the One above to help bless this, our gathering. We are glad for our families, our children, our elders, our land and the fruits of our land, which feed and sustain us. We ask for knowledge, for big-heartedness, patience, absence of conflict and love.

We ask for guidance, so that we may make, create and do good things and have good thoughts.

Thoughts which will make happen and will save the future for our native peoples here, near and far away, and it will be a good thing.

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On behalf of the 26 member tribes of the United South and Eastern Tribes Association and it's President, Brian Patterson, I'd like to welcome all of you to Washington D.C.. USET covers an enormous swath of America, stretching from the forests of Northern Maine to the Everglades of Florida, then across the Bayous of Louisiana, my home state, and on to the lands of the Lone Star State. Despite USET's geographic and cultural diversity, USET tribes have committed to the motto, "Because there is strength in unity."

Today, tribal leadership and federal gaming regulators come together once again to discuss the regulation of Indian gaming. It is my prayer that this work can be carried out in the spirit of unity, so that through collaboration and cooperation we can achieve the common goals of assuring well-regulated as well as profitable Indian gaming operations.

Although we are in Washington, I do not suggest that we model our discussions after the debt ceiling negotiations taking place in Congress and the administration right now. However, that being said,

the regulation and success of Indian gaming is as important to the individual well-being of tribal nations as extending the debt ceiling is to the well-being of the U.S. economy.

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In many ways, gaming operations have transformed native communities. For my tribe, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, gaming has not only lifted our people out of poverty, but also the surrounding non Indian communities as well. Only a few short years ago, unemployment among the Tunica-Biloxi community in Avoyelles Parish was nearly 30 percent.

Now with over 1,500 employees at our own business and the increase in local businesses and employment in the community as a whole, we have essentially reduced unemployment to the low single digits in our parish.

As a result, we have seen the well-being of our people, as measured by heath and educational indicators, leap. More significantly, we have seen it in the eyes of our youth who are full of hope and optimism about the future. After generations of poverty, the advent of modern Indian gaming has been a blessing to our tribe, as it has been to many others. And so our discussion should reflect that

this is not just about an industry, but rather that it is ultimately about ensuring the vitality of our communities by encouraging smart regulations and sound business practices, while also respecting tribal sovereignty and self-sufficiency. We can protect tribes, our gaming patrons and our communities. So again, welcome to the East. USET's prayers are with everyone gathered here for a productive session. Thank you.

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MS. COCHRAN: Thank you very much for such a wonderful opening, and thank you again for joining us. Again, in reading your bio, I know that you spend a lot of time with cultural matters, higher education matters for the children, and you tie that with the financial side. And that's an amazing combination, so I appreciate your work, and thank you, again.

We have several staff members here that I do want to acknowledge. These staff members spend a lot of time making these consultations come together for us, and they are a tremendous amount of work and a tremendous amount of planning. And I'm going to start with Ms. Rita Homa, who is standing back there. Between herself and Lael, they are probably the two women that keep me not only where I am

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supposed to be, but talking about what I'm supposed 1 2. to be talking about. So, I appreciate both of their efforts. Lael Echo-Hawk is a member of the Pawnee 3 Nation, and she is counselor to the chairwoman and 4 5 spends a lot of time keeping us on track with the regulations and the review that we are undergoing. 6 7 She is tasked with an enormous amount of work that she keeps under hand. So, I'm greatly appreciative 8 always when she is sitting next to me. We also have 10 Michael Hoenig, who is an attorney for the agency, 11 and do you represent, the East? Okay, the eastern 12 So many of you probably have had 13 interactions, for better or worse, with the lawyers. And then Natalie Hemlock is sitting next to him, and 14 Natalie is our tribal affairs coordinator and has 15 16 been with the agency a long time. And, of course, 17 hails from Seneca Nation, and so, she knows a lot about the tribes in this region. And so, we rely 18 19 heavily on her for quidance on interacting with the 20 tribes. And then Jean Wagner, where's Jean? She's our senior auditor with the audit 21 2.2 division, and she's in charge of, right now, quite a bit, since we are without a director. But Jean has 23 24 been with the agency for a number of years. Jean, I can't ,eight years, and does a lot of training for 2.5

the agency. And I know that her training program is well received. And then Keith Hicks, there you are, is our field investigator. Many of you have probably interacted with him as well, out of our D.C. Regional Office. And so, I'm glad that we have quite a bit of staff with us.

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The agenda is quite lengthy, and we've tried to break it down so that we can, kind of, focus on discrete areas in the groups for discussion. That being said though, I do want to first do two things. I'd like to have everybody introduce yourselves, because I may or may not have met you all. I think most of you I do know. But give you an opportunity to introduce yourselves for the record. And then also, if any of you have pending business that you may not be able to stay for a while or you may have to leave shortly, feel free to make statements for the record if that's what you desire and then, you can carry on. We don't want to hold you up. We understand this is a busy time for you. So, I'm going to start on this end, and if you would, just introduce yourself.

We do have a court reporter, so anytime that you speak, you do need to identify yourself so that he can attribute your statements to you. And you

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need to identify yourself properly, unless you mean to attribute it to someone else. So, I'll start

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over here.

- MR. CARROLL: Good morning everyone, I'm

  Bob Carroll. I'm chairman of the Chitimacha Gaming

  Commission.
- 7 MR. DARDEN: Greetings, I'm John Darden. 8 I'm the chairman of the Chitimacha Tribe.
- 9 MR. MICHAEL: I'm Guy Michael. I'm 10 counsel to the Chitimacha Tribe.
- 11 MR. MESKILL: John Meskill, Director of 12 the Mohegan Tribal Gaming Commission.
- MR. GESSNER: Good morning. I'm James

  14 Gessner. I'm the vice chairman of the Mohegan

  15 Tribe.
- MS. TAYLOR: Leslie Taylor, elected
  secretary of the Delaware Nation and also Attorney
  General.
- MS. BROWER: Jenna Brower, Government relations, Delaware Nation.
- MS. LITENGER: Brenda Litenger,

  councilwoman for the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe, and my

  full time job is trust program coordinator. I

  oversee the Minor's Trust Program for our tribe.

MR. HINTON: Good morning, Tim Hinton,

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- 1 | vice chairman of the White Mountain Apache Tribe.
- 2 MR. BEACH: Good morning, Arnold Beach,
- 3 White Mountain Apache Tribe, Arizona.
- 4 MR. WEBSTER: Joe Webster, attorney,
- 5 Hobbs, Straus, Dean and Walker, on behalf of the
- 6 | Seminole Tribe of Florida.
- 7 MR. BENNELL: Good morning, Chuck Bennell,
- 8 chief of staff for external affairs for the Mohegan
- 9 Tribe in Connecticut.
- 10 MR. CUMINGS: Jody Cummings, Steptoe and
- 11 Johnson, outside counsel to the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe
- 12 of Louisiana.
- 13 MR. PAPINEAU: Bob Papineau, executive
- 14 director, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Gaming
- 15 Commission.
- MS. SNEAD: Pam Snead, I'm a gaming agent
- with the Cherokee Tribal Gaming Commission in
- 18 | Cherokee, North Carolina.
- 19 MR. RENOUIST: Earl Renguist, council
- 20 member, Cocopah Tribe, Yuma, Arizona.
- 21 MR. SHIELD: Good morning. I'm Mike
- 22 | Shield, general counsel for the Salt River
- 23 Pimo-Maricopa Indian community in Scottsdale,
- 24 Arizona.
- MS. JAMES: Good morning. I'm Wanda

James, deputy director with United South and Eastern
Tribes.

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MR. EVANS: Good morning. I'm Tim Evans with the law firm, Holland and Knight.

MS. COCHRAN: All right, I think we've got everybody. Is there anyone that needs to make or wants to make an opening statement or read a statement into the record before we begin? At any point in time, please let me know. We can always submit it in, in writing, if you have something in writing. Often tribal leaders will bring something in, in writing, and we're willing to include that into the record.

I was just counting. This is the 11th consultation out of 33 consultations that the agency has undertaken for our regulatory review process. I was just out in Albuquerque and finished one last week. And before that, just up at the Tulalip Tribes, finishing another consultation. So, it's a very aggressive schedule. It is designed though, to spend as much time as we can in Indian country talking to the tribes before we put anything out in draft regulation format, if that's the desire of the tribes and of the agency to do.

As many of you are aware, the process is a long

one, but it's a necessary one that we feel like will give us the best product that we can possibly present to you as an agency. And so, we hope to start putting out some draft regulations where the decision has been made to do that, and there are some areas where we've decided, based on the feedback from the tribes, that a regulation isn't necessary. So hopefully, you'll get a chance to start seeing the final products come out, in terms of drafts, so that you can comment into the Federal Register, and we'll move forward from there onto final rules.

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So, it's a slow process, it's a long process, and we appreciate the efforts of the tribes to come to the table with us throughout, because we do believe that we will get a product that, hopefully, satisfies the majority of interest involved. So, I'm going to turn it over to a Lael. Lael is going to walk us through the morning's agenda and lay things out from us, and then, we'll begin our discussions.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Good morning. Again, my name is Lael Echo-Hawk, and I'm a member of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma. I'm currently counselor to Chairwoman Stevens, here at The National Indian

Gaming Commission. My primary responsibility has been what we're here to talk about today, and that is the regulation review, and we are very excited about it. I'm sorry. I'm a lawyer; I love this stuff. That is my disclaimer.

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So today, we are consulting, obviously, with tribes. It was important to note that this is government to government consultation and that only tribes and their designees can attend and participate in these meetings. They are not open to the public or the press. So, speak freely, this is a government to government consultation.

This consultation is part of the commission's commitment to following the guidance containing the Executive Order 13175, particularly in the process that we're in now, which is in the drafting process. Section 3 of Executive Order C (3) says that, "In determining whether to establish federal standards, the federal agencies will consult with tribal officials." And that's what we are doing.

So before we've established any standards, any rules, were talking to tribes, and we're asking you what your thoughts are on these particular issues, so that when we draft something, we draft it after getting some input from tribes.

Our process for this regulatory review. 1 2. trying to figure out, I guess about a year ago, starting in October, September/October of last year, 3 trying to figure out how are we going to do all of 4 5 Because it's a lot. There is a lot of work to do. So, what we did is we divided, it ends up 6 being about 21 different topics and regulations or potential regulations into 5 groups. Now, these 8 groups were formed by a number of factors, including 10 estimated time and resources, comments that we've 11 received, as well as the subject matter. 12 tried to group, sort of like things with other like 13 topics, so that as we move forward on this sort of juggling all the regulations, that we're doing, sort 14 15 of, the same things at the same time, when we could. 16 But these group numbers don't indicate priority. 17 That's a question that we've received over and over 18 again, and it's just, the group numbers don't 19 indicate whether the priority is higher or lower 20 than the others.

We divided the groups into three phases. We are currently in the preliminary drafting phase for all of the regulations. Anticipate though that very soon, we'll begin developing proposed rules where those are appropriate. When we do develop a notice

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of proposed rule making, the commission is committed to at least 60 days written comment period, with an additional consultation time as well. If moving forward from that, the commission decides to issue a final rule, there will again be time for written comment.

But we are in preliminary drafting phase. All of the discussion drafts that you have in your hand out and that are on our website, and there are 13 rules currently. They are just discussion drafts. We haven't set that in stone yet. So if you have comments or concerns about those, that's what we're doing today. We're in that drafting phase.

All these consultations are transcribed, which means if you speak, please use the microphone.

State your name and the tribe that you are affiliated with, so that our recorder over here can make sure that the transcript is accurate and that comments are attributed correctly. All these transcripts and the written comments are on the website at www.nigc.gov. If you can't find it, because our website is a little clunky - Natalie is laughing - please shoot us an e-mail, reg.review@nigc. Give us a call. We'll help you find it. It's easy for us. It might not be easy if

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you are not using it as much as we do.

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Also, any written comments that you have, as they come in, we scan them. We put them on the website, and we also send out receipt letters. That was one of the concerns we heard from tribes. That they sent in comments, didn't ever know what happened to it. But I can tell you that the commitment from the commission is that every comment will be reviewed and considered. They take giant binders, that I give them, home with them, and they review the comments. They review the transcripts and the summaries that we do to make sure that we are listening to Indian country. Any proposed or final rule will contain a summary of the comments and, sort of, the decision making process. again, the commission is committed to a clear and transparent process.

So, what are we doing for the next two days?
Well, we're doing everything. All the groups, this
morning and this afternoon we'll be reviewing Group
1 and Group 2, and then this afternoon, we'll also
be taking a look at Group 4. All of this is in the
PowerPoint. It's all ,I'm not going to read through
all of this because it is a lot. Tomorrow, we take
a look at Group 5 in the morning, and then we'll

come back to Group 3 and discuss class II and class II MICS and technical standards.

So this morning from now until about lunchtime, we're going to be talking about Group 1. Group 1 covers Part 514, which is fees; Part 523, which is a part that appears to be obsolete, so we're asking about whether or not it should be repealed.

We're going to talk a little bit about class III MICS, Part 542, Part 559, which is facility license modifications and then finally, a potential buy Indian regulation. For this particular group, you do have handouts for Part 514 and Part 559. You have discussion drafts in your packet.

So, Part 514, the fee regulation. We did some updating and we made some changes in the draft that we heard from tribes that needed or could be made. One of the more major things that we've done is we've changed the fee calculation to being based on the gaming operation's fiscal year, rather than a calendar year. Many, many operations, as you know, operate on a fiscal year that does not end on December 31st. And so, to make that calculation was a little bit clunky and sometimes the fees were then inaccurate simply because we weren't basing them on audited financials from the fiscal year. So, we're

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making that change.

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Additionally, we're changing the fee rate publication, the preliminary fee rate publication date from February 1, to March 1. This gives us more time to get in all the audited financials and make an accurate, or as accurate as we can, estimation of what the preliminary rate should be, which is then finalized later in the year.

We made some changes to some words, to try to be reflective of industry standards. We went back to quarterly payments. A couple of years ago the agency moved to semi annual payments, which we've heard from both tribes and from our staff was, it didn't really work well. It meant for a longer period of time, for the agency to run it's operations without receiving more income, without receiving the fees in. So it got a little bit complicated, and we went ahead and went back to quarterly payments, which we've heard over and over again that tribes actually prefer that method.

We made some clarifications. We added a notification period. So if a gaming operation changes your fiscal year, then we included a section in there were you can notify us and tell us what that is. Just so that we know.

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One of the biggest changes we made, and one of the things we've heard many, many positive comments on, is creating a late payment system prior to a notice of violation for late fees or late audited statements as they come in. Currently, well what happened a couple of years ago, was tribes submitted their fees late, and they received a notice of violation. Was, I'm sure all of you know, a notice of violation is a very, very important thing. contains many significant consequences, and it seems like it was a fairly heavy-handed way to respond to something that may have been as simple as an oversight, change in personnel, CPA had a heart attack. We actually heard that out in the Great Plains. And so, we wanted to create a system where it was a little, much like if you, we put it in the context of a parking ticket. If you get a parking ticket and pay it late, you have to pay extra. so, that's the system that we've set up. We've made a distinction between a late payment and a failure to pay your annual fee.

So, if you fail to pay your annual fee that means that you're making your payment after 91 days from the end of your fiscal year. And in that situation, if you get all the way out that far and

you fail to pay the fee, then the chair has the discretion to issue a notice of violation.

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However prior to that, there is a, sort of, graduated system. Now if you look in your packet, and I believe that it starts on page three. No, I'm sorry, on page five, line thirteen. You'll see a number of blanks. So, from one to thirty days, a percentage or a dollar amount to be assessed if the fees come in that time period. And then it goes up. Well, we anticipate that it will go up from there, but we have left blanks, and we've left blanks because we're not certain about what that percentage or dollar amount should be. And we've asked tribes to weigh in on that.

The other thing that we did in the fee section was we added the fingerprint processing fee, what that process is. It wasn't laid out. A number of tribes utilize our services to process fingerprints, and we charge a fee to cover the costs. And we just wanted to make sure that we actually laid that out, so tribes are clear on that.

MR. CARROLL: Bob Carroll, from
Chitimacha. I have a question on that. The BIA has
just introduced a new fingerprint program too. How
does this integrate with that, or is it completely

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time?

2. MS. ECHO-HAWK: It's completely separate because we work with the FBI, and I'm not sure what 3 the BIA has done. I know that the Law and Order 4 5 Bill had some, now allows tribes to go directly to 6 the FBI. Tribal police departments can directly access the FBI. Some tribes may choose to do that. Others may choose to continue using our services. 8 But we don't work with the BIA for processing 10 fingerprinting fees, we work with the FBI. 11 MR. CARROLL: Is possible we could start a 12 price ware between the BIA and the NIGC, to save 13 some fees here? 14 (Laughter.) 15 MS. ECHO-HAWK: I'll ask our general 16 counsel. 17 MR. CARROLL: Okay, thank you. 18 MR. BEACH: Arnold Beach, White Mountain 19 What's the timeframe? Is there a Apache Tribe.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: We're not making any change to our process. We're just telling you what

time frame? Is it going to be different? Agencies

Is it going to be the same, or are we talking about

now use BIA for fingerprinting, now we'll go FBI?

it is. So, we are continuing to use the FBI. We can talk to the general counsel's office and maybe talk to the BIA. Maybe it's better to go that way, I don't know. It's the first time it's been brought up.

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But we wanted to make sure that tribes knew how we collect those fees and what they are, and we'll publish them. When they're going to be published, just so tribes know. One of the things that we've heard a lot is that, we just don't know what you guys are doing or how you came to this fee amount. And we want to be very clear, so tribes can just look and see. So currently, we're not doing anything but just codifying what we currently do. If we make a change, we'll let tribes know. There will be lots of comment time, so that you guys are aware of what is happening.

MR. CARROLL: Bob Carroll again. If I could just, vice chairlady, if ,this is an area we do have an interest in, I know a lot of tribes.

Because we also are working very hard to be able to get access to the federal AFIS systems for the tribal police departments, and that's now happening. So, there is the ability to the direct internet connections and so forth through the law enforcement

networks, at a great savings of fees and so forth. And this is an area, under fingerprinting and going forward between both the BIA and the NIGC, we would like to discuss, because it affects not only gaming operations but also tribal employees and school employees, things of that sort. So, if we could just highlight that area for future discussion, we'd like to.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Okay. So, that is a new section that's on about last page of the reg, if you are interested, and we certainly will take your comments and take a look at them.

The other thing that we did, the other couple of things that we have done, is we've tried to make changes to language to be more consistent with the industry. So for example, there's been confusion about admission fee versus entry fee. We made the change, it's in Section 514(b). We've heard nothing. Tribes seem to appreciate that, so we've tried to include industry-standard language that maybe wasn't included in the draft when it first came out.

We also had a couple of questions. We asked in a notice of inquiry whether or not we should change the definition of gross gaming revenue to a GAAP

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definition, a generally accepted accounting principle definition. And as we've listened to what tribes have had to say and as we've looked more at the GAAP definition and as we've talked to our auditors, we've realized that the GAAP definition is inconsistent with what IGRA requires, and so, we haven't made that change in the draft.

Now, there has been concern because it is ,everyone, sort of, kind of, does their own thing when figuring out what a wager is, what a payout is. It's less than clear to most people about what you can deduct, what you should add in, match plays, promotions, all of these things.

So, we're working internally, and we're talking to our audit department and to our finance department about how we can clarify that for the tribes. We are thinking about adding guidance, language and doing some more trainings. But in the meantime, one of the questions that we've asked tribes is whether or not we should define in regulation what a wager or a payout is. And we haven't made that change. We haven't added any changes to those definition. I know we heard concerns last week from the Southwest that if you make those kinds of changes, then it can have an

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effect on negotiations with your state because they might pick up on those definitions. So, we certainly don't want to put tribes in a bind, but we would also like to be as clear as possible, so that when making these calculations, tribes know what it is that they can deduct and what should be included. So, if you have thoughts on those then we would certainly like to hear them.

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So, the written comment period on this discussion draft officially closed on May 31st.

That does not mean we're not taking your comments, today. Please let us know if you have thoughts or concerns.

I briefly went over 523 earlier. This applies only to tribal ordinances or resolutions enacted before 1993, that have not been submitted to the chair for approval. We searched our documents. We've asked tribes, and to our knowledge, none of these exist any longer. So, we're considering repealing this part as obsolete.

Part by 559, which is the facility license notification renewals and submission regulation. We asked if this part should be revised in the notice of inquiry, and we received a number of comments.

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So, there's two things that stuck out to us, and one was the way that this regulation was enacted. The process for it was not inclusive.

There was not real tribal consultation. And second, that it contains substance that we don't have authority over, particularly the environmental, public health and safety issues.

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So, we did some things in this section. changed the time frame for the notice of the new facility license from a 120 days to 60 days plus a possible 60 day extension. We have added some language about the agency expediting the review. have had some concerns about the language that's contained in there, and we are taking a look at that because we don't want to create another process. were trying to tell the agency that when you get the notice of facility license and we have to do an Indian lands. We have to determine whether or not the facility is located on land that is eligible for Indian gaming. What we are trying to do is tell the agency to hurry up. Don't make a tribe sit and wait, if we don't need to make the tribes sit and wait. But we may need to take a look at the language that we included. We don't want to create another process; we just want to make the agency

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move along expeditiously.

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We took out the section that requires a tribe to renew their facility license every three years. In most cases, you're not going to be moving your giant, beautiful casino. In three years, you're not going to move it or do something with it that would require you to send in a new facility license. So, simply if it expires or it has been canceled or renewed at some point, then we ask you to notify us. But otherwise there is no renewal requirement any longer.

And then in Section 559.4, the new section in the draft, this is one of the biggest changes. That particular section used to require that tribes send in a lot of stuff to us, and it was a lot of information. Then often times, tribes said it was duplicative, that other agencies have it. It created a lot of busy work and frankly went into a black hole at the agency, and we've had our staff say, "Yeah, I don't know why we do it. I don't know what to do with this stuff." And they just stacked it in the corner.

And so the purpose was, sort of, lost for everyone. So now, we took all that stuff out, and we just added a tribal attestation that the tribe

just has to issue an attestation stating the construction and maintenance of the facility and operation is conducted in a manner which adequately protects the environment, public health and safety, which is language directly from the act. Yes sir?

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MR. MICHAEL: Just a question on both the facility requirements and, I guess, it relates back to your discussion of the definition of a wager. In those states where tribes are located that are considering intrastate internet gaming, have you given any consideration to when you define a wager, where that wager occurs, and with regards to the facility and on Indian lands, where gambling occurs in those situations?

MS. ECHO-HAWK: We thought about this, talked about it. I think the act is clear about gaming activities have to occur on lands eligible for Indian gaming. Now, this whole internet discussion has ,sort of, thrown a wrench into that very nice, easy, clear - sometimes clear - definition, and is something we're considering internally. But we haven't come to any position, and certainly the agency doesn't have a position right now on internet gaming. But when it does come time to that, we're going to have to give some

serious thought to what that means.

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MR. MICHAEL: At the same time then, when you're considering these definitions, because they will play into that area, that could be at least open for discussion for later evolution, I guess.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Yeah, it's complicated.

But good point, and it is something we're thinking about. If you have thoughts on it, please send them in, love to hear them.

So, a couple of notice requirements. Just let us know when the license terminates or expires or if the facility closes or reopens. Now we have had some comments on, "Well what does 'close' mean?" And so we've included some language in there about you don't have to tell us it is a seasonal closure. We got lots of tribes in locations where some tribes open only in the winter during skiing season, some tribes open only in the summertime when tourists are in town. So if it is a seasonal opening or closure, we don't need to know about that.

We also included a section in there for temporary closures. And there is a blank there. We don't know how long the length of time is. For example, you're remodeling, putting a new roof on, and you think you're going to be closed for 60 days.

We don't want to require a bunch of paperwork back and forth if it is just a temporary thing.

Now we do need to know when the facility is open, and so we do need a timeframe. This is for the purpose of enforcement and our site visits, those kinds of things. So we need to stick a timeframe in there, we just don't know what that is, and so we left it blank. If you have thoughts on that, then let us know as well.

And then we're trying to move into at least into the 20th century, and allow for electronic submissions of paperwork and documents. One day it will be the 21st century, but right now, I'm just looking for the 20th. So, we included that language in there as well.

Written comment period on this, again, officially closed on June 17th. Obviously, we are very interested what you comments are, and if you have comments on that, we're happy to take them.

Another proposed regulation is a buy Indian regulation. Now just to be clear, this is would be a regulation that tells the agency what to do. fact, most of the regulations that we're looking at are regulations that tell the agency what to do, and then just tell you what the agency is supposed to be

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So, this would be a regulation that tells the agency when you go out and you buy goods and services, buy Indian. We are funded entirely by tribal dollars, and this commission thinks it's very important to put that money back into Indian country when we go out, and we're doing consultations for example, or we're holding a meeting or buying stuff. We're going to be moving our offices, or at least terminate them. We're going to have to think about moving our offices, and we know that there are qualified Indian businesses that could handle that for us. So, we want to make sure that the agency takes the money that tribe sent to us in the form of fees and that we put it back into Indian country when we can.

The final topic in Group 1 is how do we address class III MICS? The class III MICS has been the elephant in the room for a very long time, since about 2006. It impacts tribes, states and regions very differently. We have tribes in Oklahoma that reference the class III MICS, Part 542 specifically. We've got tribes in California who include the class III MICS and give enforcement authority to the agency through their ordinances. We've got tribes

in the Northwest and the Great Plains that say, "Get the heck out of our business. You have no business being in the class III MICS business." And we've got tribes that say, "Yeah, but it's a useful product, and it's an industry standard and a guideline, and it provides us a tool, a very useful tool."

So we've got a range of options, and as Mr. Jess Green, who represents a number of tribes in the Oklahoma area region, he said, "You know, another option that we don't include in our slideshow - and maybe I should add it - is the we don't do anything with the current Part 542, and we just take a look at issuing guidance or bulletins." But we have a very wide range of options that have been proposed. We have a very wide range of potential effect that could happen, based on any one of these particular options that we take. But I know this commission, and the chairwoman has said it a number of times. She plans to resolve this issue. It's been pending for too long, and it's something we need to resolve good, bad or ugly, however it works out. And so, we are very serious about talking to tribes. very serious about hearing what you have to say about how we should move forward with this

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So, that is it for Group 1. That will take us through this morning. The vice chair will take over the rest. Thank you.

MS. COCHRAN: All right, that's Group 1. These regulations, particularly Part 519 and Part 559, are probably the closest we are to putting out draft proposed notice of rule making. So hopefully, those will get out soon and be our first leap into that area. So I look forward to that, movement is a good thing. So, I want take us back. I know there was some initial questions on the fees, Part 514. said 519, I apologize. There has been some comments made which we tried to rectify. We could not understand why the agency moved to a semi-annual payment system. It may have had some justification. We just couldn't find it internally. But what it did to the agency, as far as how we account for things, how we pay for things, caused a tremendous amount of problem. It's like two paychecks a year. And when you're running an agency as large as ours is as far as budgeting goes, it was a very difficult process for us to undergo. So, to undo it is going to be another process. But it also didn't serve the tribes well. Some of them have commented that they

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prefer to stay on a semi-annual or an annual payment system, and they want to make sure that our regs reflect that. We certainly have no intention of saying you can't pay us once a year, you can't pay us, that's always an option. We don't want to make your accounting systems any harder than they need to be.

But we think the big thing that will be helpful is getting out of the calendar year process and getting back into a fiscal year, as the tribe defines its fiscal year. It just seems to make the most amount of sense. And so, we've gotten guite a bit of very positive feedback about that change. With the caveat that there have been some suggestions again that we put maybe some language in that says, you are certainly free to pay semi-annually or annually, because some fees are very small and that just an easier way for them to do it. So, we hope to see that in there shortly.

There is a lot of discussion over the GAAP I know in the auditing world there is a definition. preference, of course, for consistency amongst terminology. The agency, as Lael laid out, when we looked at GAAP and the newest definitions that are going into GAAP, and how we look at wagers and pay

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outs, we felt like it really is in the tribes best interest for us not to move over to a GAAP definition.

Our system, or how we've looked at it, is complex and maybe a little unwieldy. Maybe we need to get that under control, so that we can give you better guidance. It really does afford the tribes more flexibility. We're also concerned about changes in GAAP that's not looked at from an agency internally can wreak havoc in gaming. And so, we felt like that was something we didn't want to turn over control of necessarily, or at least allow to have influence on how we do it. So, the current draft does not reflect the GAAP definition. certainly want to hear if there are some statements or comments, or if tribe feels like that's still a better way, than we want to hear that, and we want to continue to talk about it. Even though that's not that been the ,what's put in the draft.

And then the fingerprint fees. One thing I wanted to add on to Lael's discussion. We charge only what the FBI charges us, so there is no administrative fee. I know that the fee was higher and the agency brought it down a couple of years to reflect that. I don't know what BIA's practice is,

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but that may be something that factors into how you look at it as well. If you're looking at it from pure cost, and we have no administrative fee and BIA does or doesn't, I don't know, then that may be something you want to factor into. But we can certainly bring it into our discussions as well. If there's something that we can do to benefit the tribes collectively, we can look at it. So, any other comments on the fees?

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The late payment system is probably the biggest benefit. It was, kind of, the primary indicator outside of getting us out of a semi-annual payment system. Thirty three NOV's issued in 2009 for late payments only, and that's a heavy hand. And that's not something we support when there are ways that we can help bring tribes into compliance that are more beneficial. I had an opportunity to spend time with a very small tribe in the state of California who got hit with a 25,000 dollar fine for a 1,400 dollar payment that was late. And that's just unacceptable, in our opinion, as a matter of policy or otherwise. And so, we were hoping this will allow the tribes greater flexibility in working with the agency. Keep enforcement in its heaviest hand to the times when it is needed the most, not for

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late payment of 1,400 dollar fees. So, we were excited about getting that out. There is a fair number of tribes, and this kind of surprised me, who asked that we not ,there's a section in there, let me get a line. On page 5, line 21.

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This section has to deal with giving the chairwoman some discretion to work with tribes on the payment amount, the late payment amount. And the thought was that if we set a number amount, let's say 50 dollars, if you're late for 30 days that's 50 dollars. But the tribe doesn't have 50 dollars, or maybe their amount isn't that great, and it seems a little unjust, to allow her to adjust down.

But what some of the tribes have said, and I think it's an interesting and a worthwhile consideration for us, is to say, why don't you set it at a percentage amount? Keep it straight up, so that every tribe knows what to expect. And also, I think, there was some concern that if not this term, or this commission, future commissioners, that the chair may want to use that to further penalize the tribes. And so, we are going to look at that.

I thought those were interesting comments, and again, why we want to talk with tribes. Because our

intent was one way, but the interpretation is being looked at a different way. And we certainly want to make sure out attempt is adequately conveyed. So, I wanted to point that out because I thought that was an interesting feedback that we received.

Is there any comments on or any concerns about repealing 523? It doesn't apply, but we certainly want to make sure we have not overlooked anything.

Part 559, the facility license notification. Again, this is an area that we, as commissioners, when we sat down to look at, we're are all on the same page to begin with. We really felt like this particular regulation exceeded the authority of the agency, was burdensome, especially on EPHS. IGRA is very clear. We only need to assure that the construction and maintenance of the facilities complies with applicable laws. We are not in that business. The tribes have a great deal of expertise, their own internal agencies that deal with environmental issues, public health and safety issues. Your compacts. The states have experts in this area. We need to just make sure that we've got an attestation that those standards are met. not really within our jurisdiction and authorities under IGRA to require the excessive amount of

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documentation when there's experts that can do that. So, we're very excited to get that regulation reduced down to what IGRA tells us it should be doing.

We also wanted to make sure that we are very clear that we are looking for verification. We don't license. IGRA doesn't grant us licensing authority, it's the tribes that license. And we want to make sure, again, that we are staying within our lanes with IGRA and get this down to obtaining verification on information from the tribes that are within the tribal authorities, not within ours.

And the comments, if I can direct you down to the bottom of page 1, on 559.2 Subsection B. As Lael pointed out in the summary, this is our attempt, again, and this is why we put it out in discussion format, to get the agency to act quickly. This is to put our feet to the fire. Not 120 days, but 60 days. And one of the things that, the comments that have come out about this section, which again, I think is what we need to take back and talk about internally, or continue to talk about internally is whether or not this section suggests that the agency must undergo a LAN status determination. That's something I think that

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requires internal discussions, continued internal discussions, to make sure that it's reflecting the attempt, which was to get the agency to act more expeditiously.

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There was also a recommendation that came out of New Mexico or Tulalip, I forget which one, that perhaps we consider a notification and consultation process in here. So that if we go beyond the 60 days, that the agency be required to sit down with the tribe and talk about why that additional time is needed, and to do that in a consultation process. And I thought that was an interesting suggestion as well.

So, I don't like to do a lot of talking. It's my job to listen. So comments on 559? Yes.

MR. MICHAEL: Guy Michael, Chitimacha. I noticed there is a blank space on the 559 sections for temporary closures. Do you have any initial notion of what you are intending there? I mean, I notice it says days, so that's at least a partial answer.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Yeah, I mean we need to know. It can't be a year.

MR. MICHAEL: Right.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: It's got to be less than a

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We have got a couple of things we need to 1 2. Like for purposes of fees statements, so we can get that from worksheets as well, when the 3 operation has been opened or closed. We also need 4 5 to know for enforcement purposes. The RDs need to know what operations are up, which are down. 6 don't have, I mean, we've all worked with contractors. For example, they say the roof is 8 going to take three months; the roof takes nine 10 Should a tribe have to let us know? months. 11 that outside the timeframe? It's really so that we 12 just know when operations are up, so that if someone 13 calls and says, "Hey, do you know which operations 14 are open or closed?" We can say, "Yeah, these are 15 the ones, and they are closed for this reason and 16 that reason." So internally, we really don't have 17 any idea, and nobody's come up with, if we don't 18 hear from tribes at some point, someone is going to 19 be like, well and throw out a number. Then we'll 20 throw it back at you guys and let you comment on it. 21 MR. MICHAEL: Just to clarify. Your 2.2 talking about the entirety of the facility? Or are you talking about a portion of the facility? 23

MS. ECHO-HAWK:

for the entire facility.

The facility license is

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MS. COCHRAN: We are absolutely looking for something that is reasonable. I mean a day closure because you've got an outage in power or something may not be as relevant, unless of course it's caused by a natural disaster. That might be a little more relevant. But we know that you all spend a great deal of time talking with our field agents, and they know when you've got emergency situations come up. So, it doesn't have to be days, maybe we can define it by a standard, although days may be easier. The intent is just to find some reasonable amount of time.

MR. DARDEN: In our area, we have a hurricane. Hurricane comes, we close the facility, evacuate and then it depends how hard you're hit, how long you are going to be closed. So, we're suggesting 30 days.

MR. HINTON: Tim Hinton, White Mountain

Apache Tribe. On this license at this point, each

Casino? Some tribes have four, so we do four?

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Yeah, the facility license is for each facility, so we know where that particular facility is located. White Mountain Apache probably has more land than say a smaller

tribe, and you might have facilities all over. And so, we just need to know where that legal description of the land is.

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MS. COCHRAN: We have just a few minutes before we go to break. I think we can throw out the buy Indian regulation. Because again, this is really geared at the agency's activities, and there was some initial confusion on whether or not the regulation, if that's the form it comes in, would extend to tribal actions, and it would not. This is solely an agency obligation. There was commentary that came out about whether or not it needed to be in a regulation format. We've been talking very closely with our financial people internally, and of course, financial people over at Interior. And there is some belief that federal law may require that we have it in a regulation. So if that is the case, then that's why you may see it. We certainly don't want to go out around enacting regulations that are hard to change. But if that's what the federal law requires in order for us to take advantage of it, then we'd like to do that.

For those of you, I know some of you sitting in the room, in our own way, even without enacting the Buy Indian Act, the commission has committed to

spending where we can, its dollars back into Indian country. Our fees come from there. We stay in your facilities when we come out to consult. We're consulting in your facilities. We're trying to train in your facilities. So, that's our way of doing it on our own. But that may not always be the case when we are gone. So, we want to find a way to encourage the agency to take those dollars and put them back into the place where they came from, where they were generated.

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So, this has not been an issue of great concern for the tribes, but again, if it comes out in a regulation format, we want to make sure that we've brought it to your attention and why we did it, and that you're aware of what it applies to. So, if there's any comments, concerns?

MR. DARDEN: Just one thing. You could take the may out, "NIGC will."

MS. COCHRAN: Absolutely, absolutely. I know they pulled for us other policies that are out there, and I was just trying to look. Yeah, "Shall utilize the contracting authority." If we get to that point. All right, anything else? Why don't we take a quick break.

(WHEREUPON, A break was taken.)

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MS. COCHRAN: All right, if we could gather around again, we'll resume. All right, well there are new people who have joined us. So, I am going to ask Keith, if you've got a microphone, if you could. Oh Jean has got it? Okay. If you wouldn't mind, if you joined us from this morning and you haven't introduced yourself, if you would please do so for the court reporter. Barbara or whoever.
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MS. SCABBY: Good morning everyone. My name is Deanna Scabby. I'm from the Salt River Pimo-Maricopa Indian Community, and I'm a council representative.

MS. BENSON: Good morning. My name is Louise Benson. I'm from the Hualapai Tribe. I'm the chairwoman.

MS. COCHRAN: Madam Chairwoman, would you like to join us at the table?

MS. BENSON: I'm fine.

MS. SHAPIRO: My name is Judy Shapiro.

I'm a lawyer here in D.C., and I'm here for the

Rosebud Sioux tribe.

MR. GREEN: My name is Jess Green. I'm a Chickasaw. I'm an attorney. I represent several tribes, and my official job on a lot of occasions is

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just watching the NIGC.

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MS. COCHRAN: I'm sorry?

MR. GREEN: Just watching the NIGC.

MS. COCHRAN: Watching the NIGC, okay.

And ma'am, were you here this morning? I didn't think so.

MS. KAISER-COLLIER: Good morning everybody. I'm Barbara Kaiser-Collier from the Quapaw Tribe. I'm the executive director of the Quapaw Gaming Agency. I'm sorry, I'm late

MS. COCHRAN: Well, we welcome you.

Anyone else? Where did Liz go? She stepped out?

If we have driven her to that point then I don't know.

Well, I want to back up because the fantastic lawyers that we have in the agency pointed out that I misspoke earlier. On the fingerprint fees. I was under the impression when we reduced the fees, we took out all the fees that we had attached on to it for the agency, and apparently, that's not the case. We do have a nominal fee that does cover the handling costs, so I want to correct that misinformation. But the new regs should spell out precisely what the FBI charges, what we charge, so that it's clear.

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The final topic in Group 1 that we didn't get 1 to is the class III MICS and the questions under 3 Group 1, we put class III MICS in Group 1 as a process question. How do you want us to address 5 In what type of form, in what manner? really got down to the process questions, and some 6 of the suggestions as Lael's PowerPoint points out, include guidelines instead of regulations. 8 There may be an agency tribal compact in process. 10 Tribal ordinances incorporating Part 542, 11 maintaining Part 542, it can be in a TAC to update 12 the current regulation. Repeal and then, Mr. Green 13 has suggested we just not have not updated the 14 PowerPoint to reflect the do-nothing stance in this 15 area.

And so, you can see that there is a panoply of suggestions on the table on how we should look at the MICS. There has been, I know many of you have participated in the most recent tribal gaming working group to come up with a proposal as well. I know that was a lot of hard work and is hard work that continues to go on.

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We, most recently, the commission has revisited internally, discussions about using a TAC, but a TAC that is not like how the agency has approached it in

prior years, using some type of a committee that is facilitated. The prior administration chose to have us act as the primary facilitator. We're not certain that's the best process. So, we thought using a facilitator that will not only keep the conversation moving amongst the group, but also help establish ground rules and help establish that everybody in the room stays to those ground rules, so that the conversation moves forward and does not stall on particular areas.

We've also been discussing with Interior some of their more current practices using TACS. They've used it in other areas, like the Indian Child Welfare Act, when they had a need to get some consensus and decisions made in a timely and very quick manner. And they had some good ideas, and they actually have some resources that we can use because we do know it's very expensive. The last TAC, and Lael you may have to correct me on this, I recall, costing over a million dollars for us to do. So we're trying to find resources that exist, so that we aren't using fees to duplicate efforts.

And we also went back to this idea because the groundwork, we believe, has been done. The two groups work product is complete or nearly complete.

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That's

We have existing proposed revisions that have been out for a couple of years now. The groundwork has really been done. It's a matter of getting the parties and the individuals to the table, having discussions and making decisions.

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And so that is the current thought process that we are at. We haven't made any decisions. to hear from you, if that's something you would support. A very abbreviated process perhaps, that doesn't require extensive time commitments again or if they are extensive, then maybe they are very compact. They are a very short amount of time. have said, and the chairwoman has been very clear about, this commission will resolve this matter before we're done, one way or another. It's been lingering, and it cannot continue to linger anymore. There needs to be some certainty that you can see, and I know those of you have spent a lot of time on the national level, you know that there is a whole range of concerns that go into the MICS. We have very differing opinions, and Lael said some of those, that we need to figure out if we can harmonize, or if not, make a decision and move on.

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the gist of what this particular grouping, including

So I'm going to turn it over to you.

the class III MICS into this grouping, that's what was intended in the discussion.

Would it be helpful? I know we've got some members of the TGWG here. Would it be helpful to ask them if they're willing to talk about the work of the group? If any of you aren't familiar?

MS. TAYLOR: Leslie Taylor, Delaware I just wanted to say on behalf of the Nation. Delaware Nation that we concur with Jess Green's recommendation for the class III MICS.

> MS. COCHRAN: Thank you.

Joe Webster, for Hobbs, MR. WEBSTER: Strauss. Just a clarification. You've listed a number of options in terms of how the commission might proceed with the class III MICS. Has there been a timeline set for when there's going to be a decision? In other words, for example, if you do proceed with the TAC, when is it going to be decided that's going to be the course of action? Thank you.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Thanks Joe. We anticipate that following this meeting, the commission will reconvene and make a decision. I would anticipate, we'll send something out letting everyone know what we're going to do. Within the next two weeks, I think you will see something from us on direction on

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MS. COCHRAN: Yeah, I looked at Lael, because like I said, she keeps us on track. She is the one that's bugging us constantly.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: It is very difficult.

MS. COCHRAN: I am waiting to hear from you. So, I knew it was going to be soon. I didn't realize it was going to be that soon. So, does that help?

All right well, we can always come back to that at any point. Again, I'm going to try to keep us moving along, so that perhaps we can have an early afternoon this afternoon.

MS. COLLIER SMITH: Excuse me, I would like to yield to our attorney, Elizabeth Hummer.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you.

MS. HOMER: I believe vice chair that you had asked about the TGWG's work and, kind of, what it's status is.

For those of you who may not be familiar with the tribal gaming working group, the tribal gaming working group is a coalition of, for lack of a better word, interested parties or affected parties in the tribal gaming industry. It includes tribal leaders, tribal gaming regulators, systems

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engineers, IT personnel, surveillance personnel, accountants, auditors, manufacturers, attorneys.

It's a large coalition. We've been working since, oh approximately last November, in anticipation of this NIGC regulatory review process, to develop a proposed set of class II minimum internal control standards.

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And the genesis for this group goes back a number of years to when a tribal advisory committee was convened in order to develop technical standards for class II gaming machines or class II gaming systems. And the group has, kind of, just stayed together.

One of the things that was discovered during the work on the technical standards was that there were a lot of procedures and MICS kinds of things being put into technical procedures that really couldn't be verified by gaming laboratories. And the idea of the technical standards was to have an evaluation by independent gaming laboratories on the equipment itself. And so, the group had recommended that it continue work and develop a set of class II minimum internal control standards, so that we could keep the two kinds of processes separate. We'd have the technical process over here, but we would also

address the minimum internal control needs for class II, in a set of class II MICS. And those MICS were developed in conjunction with the NIGC, the technical working group, or the TGWG, stayed together through that process and worked with the and NIGC's tribal advisory committee to develop those regulations.

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The regulations, however, were not completely completed. What you have to do is, the parts that were missing from Part 542, there was a cross-reference in Part 543, in order to fill in the gaps. So since last November, the TGWG has been working on getting a comprehensive set of MICS, so that there's no more gap filling needed. That it is a comprehensive set of minimum internal control standards, and they are going to be, tomorrow.

Stephanie Brian, who is the vice chair of the Poarch Creek - the Poarch Creek being a class II gaming tribe - their leadership has been very much a big part of this TGWG effort. She's going to be presenting that to the commission, our work product.

We did already submit a set of MICS to the NIGC, but what the working group thought was more appropriate than just a set of MICS, was also a set of comprehensive guidance documents that would, kind

of help spell out what the best practices are in the industry for achieving compliance with the MICS. So that's what's going to be presented tomorrow.

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The group is also working on completing a comprehensive checklist for the audit procedure for the MICS and that will be submitted probably in another couple of weeks. The work just didn't quite get finished for that part. It just barely got finished for the quidance document.

So, that will be tomorrow, and there'll be a thorough explanation and also a document that's detailing what changes were made, why they were made, and those kinds of things to help the commission in review.

It's the hope of the working group that these documents will be acceptable to the NIGC as possibly the starting point for the consultation process on the final, I guess, the final draft of proposed MICS regulations for class II gaming. So, that's in a nutshell what's going on.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. I appreciate that. The group I know has worked for quite some time, and I know has involved an extensive number of people, and we look forward to seeing the completed document. We've been asked on several occasions

whether or not we would put the initial documents submitted by the group up onto our website. We've declined to do that because it's not complete without the guidance. But also members of the group have been willing to provide them directly, without going through our agents, and we felt that was an appropriate avenue to share the information. So, if anybody hasn't seen the work of the group, wants to see it, we've got several people here who I'm sure we could make sure that you get that information from them.

The other thing I wanted to mention, or two things. If a TAC is put together or formed, that will not be the end of the discussion. That is not going to replace our ultimate obligation to consult at some other point on the MICS.

It is the first process. Just as we've done now, we'll put out discussion drafts. We'll put out draft whatever regs. If any come to be, those would go out in draft form, and they would go out in a notice that can allow tribes to comment. And also, the forming the TAC, or a TAC would not imply in any way that we are committed to some type of regulation as the end result. So, that's just too far down the road. That's the big questions, and that's what has

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to be answered. But we want to make sure that does not convey an outcome that we haven't determined.

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It is the process by which will be used to discuss this. So, anything else on the MICS?

All right, Ms. Lael, will you walk us through the next group?

MS. ECHO-HAWK: All right, moving on.

Really exciting stuff. I'll bet you guys can hardly wait. Okay, so Group 2 covers Part 573, which is the enforcement regulations and then all of the regulations that concern the proceedings before the commission. So, that includes any sort of appeal that a tribe or a management contractor, which are about the only two, sort of, parties. There's more than that, but the two primary parties that would appeal something before the commission.

They are, sort of, scattered around in the current regulations. So, I'm going to walk you through on how we've tried to address that particular issue. But first of all, if you look in 573, which you do have that handout in your packet. Part 573 is the enforcement regulation. That's where you talk about NOV's, you talk about how enforcement happens.

And one of the things that the commission has

committed to, and you've heard each of them say over and over again, this acronym, ACE, assistance compliance enforcement. So, in order to emphasize the commitment of the agency to voluntary compliance, in 573.1 the commission has included that voluntary compliance as a goal of the commission. So that sets up the framework, that set up the context for how the agency should go forward with any enforcement actions.

We added then a new section. And this new section outlines the pre-enforcement action process. So before we get a notice of violation, a formal enforcement action, the agency would issue a letter of concern and or a notice of noncompliance. We're, kind of, playing with the terminology there a little bit internally.

But basically, a letter of concern would be issued to a tribe that says, "Hey, we see this taking place, we see this certain incident or something that could be a violation.

We are concerned about it. Take a look and let us know what you think."

On the other side, a noncompliance notice confirms that we have seen something, it is clear to us that there is, the tribe or the gaming operation

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is out of compliance, and we state corrective action.

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Now, one of the things that has come up a number of times is that the regulation says either action may contain a time period for the respondent to come in to voluntary compliance. And we've heard several times that we should make this more clear, that the notice or letter should give the timeframe, so that it's not, there is not this fuzzy, a tribe doesn't know how long they have to come into compliance. We should be more clear about that, so if you have some thoughts on that, we'd like to hear it.

Neither this letter of concern nor noncompliance notice is formal agency action. This is preliminary to that. The notice of violation or enforcement action would be the final agency action. Which, if the corrective action, the necessary corrective action isn't taken at that time, a notice of violation or enforcement action may be taken.

We had to add of course, and the caveat here, that a pre-enforcement action process doesn't limit or constrain the chairs discretion to issue a notice of violation. This was important because there, sometimes there are emergent situations, when it

simply is not possible to provide time or notify the tribe to come into compliance. It needs to happen right away. So, the chair needs to have the discretion to do that.

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We have heard from Mr. Green, sitting over there, that there should be some, perhaps something built-in, so that if a tribe gets this sort of notice and they try to respond, they ask for a consultation, they ask for a meeting with the agency, then the agency would be constrained from issuing a notice of violation for a certain number of hours or days.

Certainly, if it's an emergency situation, then that time needs to be constrained. But if there's a request by the tribe to meet with the agency, that the agency hold off on issuing a notice of violation.

I hope I summarized that accurately. If not, I'm sure he'll correct me. And if you have an comments or thoughts on that or other suggestions, then we'd certainly like to hear them.

The written comment period on this discussion draft closes on August 9th. So if you have comments on this, it's very helpful to us for you to make the comments on the record here, and also to send in

letters to the office.

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Okay, so the newest thing, this is my ta da dun (sic). We've been working very hard for a while now internally on the proceedings before the commission. And this is stuff that I apologize for all of you non-attorneys in the room. Yes? Can you get to a mic, please, and then you have to state your name and all that. Thank you Judy.

MS. SHAPIRO: Thank you. My name is still Judy Shapiro. I have a couple of questions about your letter of compliance or letter of concern. Is this intended to replace the PNOV, which has always been an informal pre-notice of violation kind of process?

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Basically. The PNOV is not formalized anywhere, and we wanted to tell, the commission wanted to tell the enforcement division in the agency, these are the steps you have to take. A tribe needs to know that there's going to be these steps that happen before, so that they can come into voluntary compliance. I don't think we've actually had that discussion about whether or not it absolutely replaces a PNOV. It seems to me that it likely would because we're trying to set out a framework that's clear, that is not in mystery land,

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- that just happens some times and not at other times.

  So, that's what we were trying to do here.
  - MS. SHAPIRO: Yeah, because I know some other agencies do PNOVs, and there might be some practice out there to be looking at.
  - MS. ECHO-HAWK: We actually borrowed this I think from either the FCC or the FAA.
    - MS. SHAPIRO: I'll find out, yeah okay.
    - MS. ECHO-HAWK: I think it's the FAA.
- MS. SHAPIRO: I don't think it's FCC,

  because I know theirs. The question then becomes is

  this a public document, or is it only between the
- 13 | agency and the tribe?

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- MS. ECHO-HAWK: And we've heard that asked before, and I think we need to clarify that, I think from our perspective, right now, that it would be, that's between the tribe. The only things that's public, would be available for, well, I don't even know, I'd have to think about that. I don't know if they would be available for FOIA or not. But confidential information and all that. So, it's something we need to think about and it's been raised a couple of times, so we'll take a look at that.
  - MS. SHAPIRO: My immediate thought is the

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implications for a tribe was financing documents outstanding, and is this going to start triggering default and is this going to cascade. So I'm sort of, even though it's not final agency action, it might almost be worse that way. Because like the old advisory opinions, the tribe can't challenge it, but it could have implications. So, that's where I start getting nervous.

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MS. COCHRAN: The PNOV's aren't public though, are they?

MS. SHAPIRO: I don't think so, but word gets out.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Yeah, you're going to have to use a microphone.

MS. HOMER: Yeah, what I was saying is, I believe there is an appropriate FOIA exception for investigative matters and those kinds of things.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Did you have anything else that you wanted to talk about on this one?

MS. SHAPIRO: Yeah, back on that one.

Even though there is a FOIA exception for it, it might make the agency's life easier if it were expressly provided that this is between the tribe and the agency only and shall not be available, because then you don't have to do a FOIA fight. I

mean it's six on one, half a dozen on the other.

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MS. ECHO-HAWK: We've heard that comment, and we will certainly evaluate it. Because the idea here, the intent here, is to be as proactive with the tribe, bring them into voluntary compliance. We don't want to get on shouting it from the top of the Capitol Building, "Look, you guys got a letter of noncompliance." We don't want to do that. So, how can we help bring the tribe to voluntary compliance without raising a bunch of-

MS. SHAPIRO: Right.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: The same concerns that come along with a letter of violation enforcement.

MS. SHAPIRO: No, I appreciate that, and I'm not attacking the intention. I just wanted to raise some questions.

MR. MESKILL: So one comment. John

Meskill from the Mohican Tribal Gaming Commission.

Have you considered in the compliance, noncompliance letter, setting a date for a compliance hearing?

The hearing could be waived by the tribe, but at least you set up a forum. The tribe can go in and explain its side of the story. And I've found that in gaming license actions, that's very helpful for both sides to understand what the issues are on both

sides before you jump to the next step. Thank you. 1

MR. MICHAEL: Guy Michael, Chitimacha. Two things, I think. Maybe I'm missing something, but there seems to be an understanding that even under this letter of concern, is there or is there not an opportunity for the tribe to respond that there is no reason for concern? Or is this a fait accompli, that once you receive this letter of concern, there is something wrong? The language seems to imply that you must take corrective action within a certain number of days. So that to me means, there is something to her correct. Is it contemplated, or maybe it should be more specific that there would be an opportunity for the tribe to say we don't agree with you? And then, secondly, under Subsection C here where it says, "Either action under Subsection B may provide a time period." Should the be a shall?

MS. COCHRAN: We received similar comments as to the may and the shall. Where would you recommend, I'm looking at the way this is set up. Do you have any initial thoughts? I agree with what you're saying. This is set up to say the agency obviously believes the tribe has a noncompliance issue. And so, the expectation is that you'll come

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into compliance. Now if the tribe disagrees with that, the way this is set up, do you have a suggestion of where we might add in?

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MR. MICHAEL: Possibly there at C, just looking at this for the first time. But possibly at C, where it says, "Provide a time period for the respondent to either come into voluntary compliance or respond in some kind of language where their opportunity to respond they are already in compliance."

MR. CARROLL: I have a question on that also. Is it understood or is it planned that this would be sequential. That there would be, step one would be a letter of concern, then noncompliance? Or will there be, it would be anticipated that because of the say, the scope of the potential violation, you might go right to Step 2?

MS. ECHO-HAWK: I think it's fact specific, so yeah. Say Keith or somebody went and did a site visit, and they say something that was a clear, there was something going on that was out of compliance. Then we would issue the notice of noncompliance. But if there's something that just doesn't seem quite right, then that might be the letter of concern. But it's not necessarily

sequential, it could be. And then it could start at the-

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MR. CARROLL: Second step? Okay, because what Guy indicated to add in C on that, for the tribe to have an opportunity. It just seemed to me that if you went 1 first, and then 2, you could say, unless the matter has already been resolved or unless the tribe has satisfactorily responded. But you still would need something under 2, I think, to give the tribe a chance, so that there is no presumption of wrongdoing. You know?

MS. COCHRAN: Is there additional comments? Turn on your mic, Liz.

MS. HOMER: Judy made me turn it off. I noticed that in Section 5-7, well, let me premise this by saying I really support this conceptually. I think conceptually this is really a good idea. There's a couple of specific things in here that kind of make me breathe deeply when I first read it. And that is in part by 573.4, "When may the chair order, issue an order of temporary closure. - and this is item A 6, and that would be - when there is clear and convincing evidence that a gaming operation defrauds a tribe or customer."

I really think that this opens the door to

patron disputes before the NIGC, and tribal 1 2. governments have entire processes, including 3 judicial appeals processes to handle patron complaints. So, to open the door to that, I think, 4 5 is actually not a good thing for either tribes or the NIGC. I know that the NIGC does get upset 6 7 patrons calling their regional offices and complaining and those kinds of things. And up to 8 this point, the NIGC's position has always been, 10 "You need to contact the tribal gaming regulatory 11 agency." That's a really good answer, and I just 12 think that if there is a broader thing, a pattern of 13 conduct or something, maybe that's something worth 14 considering. But I think the way this is written, 15 it's going to, it implies that patrons can come to 16 the NIGC. So that scares me, and I think it 17 undermines the tribal government structures that are 18 already in place, including judicial review.

All of my clients have a . . . for patron disputes have a complete process, including judicial appeals. So the next, I think that there needs to be an agency standard, even for a notice of noncompliance. I don't know if it needs to be a clear and convincing standard or if it's a reasonably belief standard, but I think that due

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process dictates that there be some standard for agency action in this regard and an opportunity for reply before the next steps. So I think that those, that's just, kind of, basic due process that might ought to be more flushed out here.

And finally, I don't see in here anything that allows the NIGC to refer or defer to tribal gaming regulatory agencies. And I think we can all agree on this. I mean part of the reason that we have the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act is to strengthen tribal government.

But when the agency fails to recognize that it's, kind of, partners with the tribal gaming regulatory agencies and provide for proceedings that one, promote efficiency at the federal agency level, by leaving certain things to the tribal regulatory agency. Not everything is a federal case, and I would say probably 95 percent of the time, these are the kinds of issues that tribal gaming regulatory agencies are already handling as a matter of course. And it would seem to me that a refer and defer kind of process or what U.S. attorneys call - no, not nol pros - kind of, when they defer or when they choose not to proceed with investigation because it is being handled by the state or by the tribe or those

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kinds of things is something that ought to be built into this.

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MS. COCHRAN: Thank you, Liz. Can I take you back to your comments on page 3, on Subsection 6? Because this is existing language. Is it your suggestion that it be stricken?

MS. HOMER: Yeah, I would strike it. One, the NIGC really doesn't do that, and I think it would be a huge strain on resources if the NIGC got seriously into the business of handling patron disputes.

MR. MICHAEL: Guy Michael from Chitimacha.

I agree with respect to the customer aspect of it.

But do you think that defrauding a tribe would be struck?

MS. HOMER: No, I think that's a completely appropriate thing for the NIGC to do, if there is a standard, and this one does contain a clear and convincing standard. The problem is that sometimes things get blown out of proportion within a community. And I know that sometimes people will become very, very concerned and rumors float around and everyone goes running to the NIGC that there is some terrible thing going on here, when it is basically an audit exception or something like that.

So, I think it's really important to maintain a clear and convincing standard on that kind of thing.

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And I also think that's another good reason to defer to the tribal gaming regulatory agency, because it's really in the best position to, kind of, get to the bottom of the facts. Whether this is, kind of, a super inflated rumor of wrongdoing or where there's really some serious problem that requires correction.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you both. Are there other comments or thoughts? I know there is many a lawyer in this room, and I know we love to get paid by the word. Any of these comments, we'll keep notes, and of course, we have the transcripts. But if anybody is willing to put them into written format, that's always appreciative and helpful as we share amongst our lawyer staff as well. Do you want to go forward?

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Okay, so moving along in Group 2, and we can always come back to enforcement if we need to. Group 2 also contains all these proceedings before the commission. So, this is appeals of approvals, disapproval's of management contracts, ordinances, appeals of a notice of violation, temporary closure order, all of those

things.

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What you have in your packet would repeal parts 519, 524, 539, 577, which as you can see are sort of scattered around, and it creates a new Subchapter H. So, if you looked in the structure of the regs, you would see that there is a number of subchapters, and the subchapter following, sort of, the enforcement of the subchapter was reserved. And so we unreserved it, and we plugged in the proceedings before the commission, created a new Subchapter H, which contains parts 580 through 585. And this is our attempt at creating, sort of, the civil rules. This is how we practice. This is how things go when you file an appeal before the commission. And I'll walk through those briefly.

Part 580, which is the first section, is the rules of general application in these proceedings before the commission. So, we did things like create a definition section that applies to the subchapter. What does days mean, what does ex parte And we tried to keep it as layperson friendly as possible. We're lawyers, we like big words in Latin, especially the vice chairwoman over here. But most people don't speak Latin anymore, and so we tried to restrain ourselves when we were drafting.

Let us know if we were not able to do that all the way.

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And so, we added this general rule section.

Otherwise, things ended up being duplicated and this seemed to be a cleaner way to do that. That is part 580.

Part 581 is a motions section. So, what motions can you file when you are in an appellate proceeding before the commission? And there is different levels of participation for an ordinance appeal, for intervention, when can you file a motion before a presiding official. We wanted to be very clear. We don't want to hide the ball. included, and this was a little bit, we talked about this quite a bit, a motion for reconsideration, which the lawyers in the room probably know more about than anyone else. There was precedent set within the agency that an appellant could file a motion for reconsideration after a decision, the commission had been reached. This was nowhere, but there was certainly precedent for it, and if you were of the mind or your attorney was, they would dig around, find the precedent, site it, and file a motion for reconsideration.

This leads to, sort of, due process concerns.

It leads to exhaustion of remedies concerns, if the appellant decides to litigate up into federal court. And so we wanted to be very clear. If there is a process for reconsideration, we wanted to tell you what that was. And so, we included that in this particular section.

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Part 5A2 deals with the appeals of disapprovals of gaming ordinances, resolutions and amendments. It says who can appeal a disapproval, a tribe. you can do that, what happens if you don't file in time or you fail to file at all, what motions can be filed, standards of review, which is de novo in this case. Decision, when a decision will be issued, what the decision will contain, that it will also include an effective date. And we say this throughout. We say this is final agency action for the purposes of, let me read that exactly. "It's final agency action for the purposes of judicial review and that in the absence of a decision by the majority of the commission, the chair's decision then morphs into the final decision of the commission." And I had to put this in there, because we've had situations where we have only two members of the commission. One commissioner is recused, and you've

got the other person, and so instead of the commission taking it up, the chairs action simply morphs into the final agency action, which then can be litigated into court.

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Part 583, this is the appeals from approvals or disapprovals of management contracts or amendments to management contracts. Again, the format is the same: who can appeal, how to appeal, what happens if you file late or don't file at all, what motions standards of review, which for some reason this draft is missing 583.6, which is the standard of review. But it is the same standard of review as in 584 and 585. We'll fix that, and it will be included, and we'll update that draft today or tomorrow. And then again, final agency action.

584 is appeals before a presiding official on the notices of violation, proposed civil fine assessments, temporary closure order, or the chair's decision to void or modify a management contract, the notice of late fees and late fee assessments.

Now some of you know, some of you may not know, if you've never had to appeal an enforcement action before the commission, then you may not realize that you, sort of, have two options. A tribe can choose to appeal their decision before a presiding

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official, who is, sort of, an administrative law judge. You go before them; you have a hearing. It is very, sort of, very much like a civil court proceeding that you would see otherwise.

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That presiding official then, has 30 days to get their decision to a recommendation. They review the paperwork, review the hearing. They make a recommendation to the commission. The commission then takes a look at the presiding official's decision or recommendation and accept it or don't accept it and then issue a decision. And that's all laid out in this section. That's one route that you can go.

A tribe or a appellant can also decide to just simply go into Section 585. This is a typo. But this is an appeal before, this is like a written appeal to the commission. So instead of there being a full-blown hearing, what happens is you file a bunch of paperwork in front of the commission and again, the section lays it out: who may appeal, how to appeal, motions, all of that. All that stuff. One of the things that we tried to include part 585, let me find that page. One of the key, sort of, complaints or concerns that we heard was that there is this appearance that if the chairperson has

brought the enforcement action, they've sort of been the prosecutor and brought it through the process. Signed off on notice of violation, temporary closure order or whatever it is. Then it seemed improper to have the chair, when you were in front of the commission, which the chair sits on the commission, we heard, well, one of the complaints or one of the suggestions was that the chair no longer, would not be able to sit on the commission and hear that.

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Unfortunately, however you look at it, the act defines the commission as including the chair. So we can't say no, the chair can't participate because the act says that he can, he or she can.

So, what we tried to do was indicate that the chair, just in these particular motions, sort of, wouldn't participate. So, the chair wouldn't be sitting up here, reading all of the documents that have been submitted, then turn around and hustle down to the other end of the table and file documents of their own and resubmit it for himself to then review.

So we tried to indicate that, and that's on page 3, line 21. It says, "The chair shall not - this is in motions, in the motions section - the chair shall not either individually or through

counsel file a response to motions." So when you are simply filing an appeal to the commission on written documents, the chair, who initially began the action or prosecuted the action, wouldn't be engaged in a back-and-forth with you at the same time as they are sitting on the appeal making the decision.

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So, one of the concerns we heard was, and what we . . . sort of this appearance of impropriety. So conceivably, say, I'll throw my tribe under the bus. Say an NOV has been issued to the Pawnee Nation. And it's been issued. It's been signed by the chairperson. The chairman is the only person allowed to sign these things. Or acting at the time, whatever. So then, the Pawnee Nation decides that they are going to file an appeal before the commission. Not to the presiding official, they are not going to go through a hearing. They are just going to file an appeal just on written submissions only.

In that instance, and the nation files motions et cetera, the idea is - and I'm sorry, I'm not being clear here - the idea is that the chair won't be participating in an adversarial back-and-forth. That whatever documents that the commission has in

front of them, that they have simply because all 1 that paperwork would be at the agency, because they developed the notice of violation in this instance, 3 would be there. If the nation filed a motion that 4 5 the chair wouldn't respond. The chair wouldn't The chair's attorneys wouldn't respond. 6 respond. 7 It would simply sit there. And then, when all that information comes before the commission, the 8 commission has a whole would look at it and make a 10 decision based the body of documents that they have. But there wouldn't be this adversarial 11 12 back-and-forth. The nation files a motion. The 13 chair files a response. The nation files a 14 rebuttal. There wouldn't be any of that simply 15 because it does appear to be very, it just doesn't 16 The chair is sitting, helping make the look right. 17 decision, but then they also get to be able to respond to a motion filed by the appellant. 18 19 just doesn't seem fair. So, that's the intent. And 20 that was one way that we thought could alleviate 21 some of the concerns about the chair sitting on the 2.2 commission hearing and appeal. MR. MICHAEL: 23 Guy Michael, with 2.4

discovery process? I see when you do ask for an

Is there any contemplation of any

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oral hearing, the chair responds with a list of proposed witnesses and their summary of their testimony. But can you depose them or serve interrogatories on them? Is there any idea of any kind of discovery procedure?

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MS. ECHO-HAWK: If you look at Part 584, which is where the, that's where the actual hearing that's before the presiding official. There is the presiding official. If you look on Page 7, the presiding official can permit all of that stuff, if they choose. So yeah, it's a matter of the, in that instance, it's the presiding official who will make the decision to issue subpoenas and do sort of all of the, sort of, ALJ stuff that they normally would. Yes, ma'am?

MS. SHAPIRO: It's nice to see some actual process proposed for commission proceedings. I have a couple of very large suggestions or one small, one large. The first is that in your definition sections I suggest that you define proceeding. Just because, it's not necessarily obvious. And then my concern is that this, in fact, carries forward one of the defects of the existing rules. Which is that it defines which proceedings have appeals but leaves out whole classes of proceedings by not mentioning

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them. I think you should have a miscellaneous section because there are other final actions of the chair that, I guess, by default would be subject to appeal only in District Court. But if that's the way you want to do it, you might want to say that.

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But if you do want to have an appeal process available in the commission for a final agency of the chair, a final action of the chair, a declaration as to a classification. If we're moving away from advisory commissions, a declaration about land eligibility, any of those things that do come up, and which do have binding final agency effect,

I don't know if you are intending to foreclose those appeals, which apparently are not now within the regs. Or if it is just, it didn't come up because you are looking at the existing regs. But I think you need to be thinking in broader terms about what is going to be appealable within the commission.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. Liz, can I ask you to hold on for one second? You only have two more screens don't you? Let her finish just the opening comments, and then I'm going to return.

Just so we get it all out on the table.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: My last comment then is

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that the written comment period on this closes

August 22nd. So, all of these comments are great,
they are great here, and they would be great on
paper and letters to our office. So that's it.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you.

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MS. HOMER: My comment is that to some extent, I agree with what Judy said, which is it's nice to see process. But at the same time, once you lock in a process, you've locked in. And I'm not sure that this one is even going to be ready for comment on August 22nd. I think that what's happening here is that the commission would benefit from a roundtable discussion with attorneys that practice before the commission.

It seem to me in reading this, no offense to the Office of General Counsel, that this is really written from the NIGC's General Counsel's experience. And it really doesn't take fully into account, what it's like to be on the other side trying to practice before the NIGC.

And I note that in several areas. I have only read this today. I've only got a copy of this today; this is the first time I've seen it. So, I've looked at it very quickly. I don't want to get too far into this, but the things that just strike

me as needing further reflection are things like how does this dovetail with the consultation process?

When does something actually become a proceeding?

Everything could be a proceeding.

Any time you get a letter of concern, that could end up being deemed a proceeding. This anti ex parte rule, the NIGC, when we litigate with the NIGC, you are not handling appeals or disputes between parties. You're handling disputes between the agency and the tribe. And there's got to be some flexibility built in. I think IGRA was intended by how it is structured that there be informal processes available, including one-on-one meetings between tribes that have been affected by some agency action and the gaming commission. And the commissioners without calling it a formal appeal or those kinds of things, and I'm not seeing where these lines are drawn here, in looking at this.

I don't want to see a procedure get in place that really ties the commission's hands from making decisions. Administrations change. You all only have three year terms. Most of the time, the chairman is not ever going to be sitting on an appeal of the chairman's own decision, it's going to be the future chairman.

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That chairman may want to revoke their decision without an appeals process. There ought to be an opportunity for negotiation, for consultation, for reconsideration. I noticed that this said, "Only one reconsideration is possible." Well, there may be a change in circumstances where a reconsideration, even several years down the line, might be worthwhile.

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I know that the point here is to get to a final agency action, so that the tribes can get through this process and get into federal court. That can be done in simpler ways, without tying the commission's hands and precluding it from having informal processes for the resolution of these issues.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you, Liz. There is also, in addition to the need to bring finality to the decision-making of the agency, but there is also a need - some of what you're seeing, and Liz I know is greatly suited to this- is what we believe is a need to bring some of the agency's practices that are informal but really are not shared amongst all tribes into what exists, so that all tribes understand what the agency can and cannot do. There is a lot of informal activities going on that don't

ensure due process, and they certainly don't ensure due process for all tribes.

MS. HOMER: I appreciate that vice chair, but I would caution that when you're writing a regulation, it's the rules of construction. take into account the rules of construction in building these things because what you don't want to do is inadvertently prohibit something that's basically a standard agency practice. So, I mean, there's two ways to go. Too much detail and it seems to, it is interpreted to take the field. this is all that is available. Too little detail and you've got a situation where we can do lots of things that not everybody knows about.

But that can be discussed in the preamble, where the intent is not to foreclose informal processes. And then, to make it clear in the regulation itself, that this does not foreclose informal processes, consultation, negotiations.

Oh, and the ex parte, one other thing. It says you can't talk to the commission or any employee of the commission. Well, that's like everybody, and it should at least say something, other than the Office of General Counsel or something like that because this would be a complete shutout.

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there has been an NOV, you can't communicate with anybody at the NIGC and that can't be what you mean, surely not.

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MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. Good morning,
Mr. Green. I'm sorry Barbara. I overlooked you. I
apologize.

MS. COLLIER SMITH: That's okay. I haven't had time to physically look at all these thoroughly. But knowing from experience some of the things that you are referring to and trying to alleviate, and I appreciate that. But, perhaps I have overlooked it. Is there any provision for the commission to bring preliminary requests for action to the tribes, prior to any of these provisions, giving opportunity for the tribe to review, to move forward with the decision? Like, for example, if the NIGC had an issue with the tribe, would there be a preliminary provision, is there, maybe I have overlooked, to address that before some of these provisions take place?

Like, we have been called to NIGC for an issue, given the information, reviewed the information, investigated the information and did agree with what the NIGC was saying. I'm not saying that when these would take place we disagreed, but given the

opportunity to investigate and review and then take action. And then, when our case we took a positive action, then there wasn't any issue that the NIGC had with the tribe.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: These regulations kick in after that process has begun. So, when we were talking earlier about Section 573 and the voluntary compliance and the pre, the notice of noncompliance letter and the letter of concern, that would be the time that we would do that. Now, I think some points are well taken here about the opportunity in making sure that it is included in the regulation that the tribe has an opportunity to respond. But yeah, that would be in that 573 section. would kick in after that investigation and everything. The responses have been concluded, and the agency has made the decision that it needs to move forward with an enforcement action or approval, disapproval, whatever, however these might arise.

MS. COLLIER SMITH: Okay, thank you.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. Mr. Green, I haven't seen you in about a week.

23 (Laughter.)

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It's been too long. How are you doing?

Welcome.

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Well, thank you. My name is MR. GREEN: Jess Green. I represent the Chickasaw Nation and several other tribes. I have had the chairman of the NIGC issue a notice of violation when the other commissioners didn't know. So don't give me this, you're going to always have all this information.

Number 2, if I can't talk to any of the employees of the commission, I can't even make a FOIA request. So, that's in violation of FOIA.

There are occasions that I need to know what facts you have based your decision on, and there's nothing in here that gives that to me, anywhere. I have to go ask permission to take depositions, how is that fair? This is a Star Chamber prosecution if I have an NIGC chairman give me a citation out of the blue. It may be on one field officer's report. It may be wrong. But how do I even know the report exists?

Let me suggest that in other gaming commissions, several in Oklahoma, when tort claims are filed, it is incumbent, at a certain point, that the file of management or operations that gave rise to all these facts be delivered. There ought to be an automatic delivery of your file that caused the violation, if we are going to have an appeal.

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other words, I need to see what you have in your file that makes you think I've got this big violation.

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As Barbara says, if I get a chance to see what it is, I might fix it. Or I might be able to respond and say, "Oh no, someone does not have all the facts." In fact, I have done that on occasion when I've gotten letters from the NIGC General Counsel that reached determinations and asked for a meeting with all the NIGC in my area.

Now, I also note that in filing an application for appeal, I can do it by regular mail. Do you know how long it takes you to get regular mail? That's not an appropriate thing. The time will have run. I never know how long they're going to quarantine a regular mailing or even a certified mailing. I need a mechanism of hand delivery that is easier than coming to the notice that is attached to the order.

(WHEREUPON, The was a problem with the microphone.)

20 (WHEREUPON, The was a problem with the microphone.)
21 (Laughter.)

MS. COCHRAN: You've gone and broke the mic, Jess.

MR. GREEN: I get wound up, and you turn
me off again. Are you there? Okay. I need a place

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to send my notice to that I know it can be received.

Why can't I give it to my regional office? If I
hand deliver it, why can't I hand deliver it to my
regional offices? You know I represent Fort Bell
now. Do you know how far my regional office is? I
mean, it's 11 hours by drive. But still, that's a
whole lot better than having to get to D.C.,
particularly if there are flight restrictions in
place.

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MS. ECHO-HAWK: I guess the thought was the first, the notice of appeal would be personally served. You can use a process server, whatever, I understand your concern. I think one of the concerns we have with delivering it to the field office is that our attorneys are not located there, and we need to make sure that we get everything at headquarters.

MR. GREEN: We're talking about initiation. Your secondary procedures that everything else goes by e-mail. It's how you initiate, and so you've got a timeline that is running. And getting that timeline served, if I don't have another tribal attorney, like Elizabeth that's in D.C., that can walk my fax over and put it in your hand, it's sometimes very difficult for

small tribes in remote areas. And I don't think you're giving any consideration to that.

It is easy if I've got a tribe that's got five lawyers, one of whom is in D.C., for me to get you your notice. It will be walked over. But if I find a small tribe with a 100 or 200 game facility way out in the middle of Montana, responding is difficult. I don't have a lot of systems. And so, I would like an easier, more efficient way to make my initial opening of my appeal.

Again, the e-mails, thereafter, work fine. Τ would suggest that we confirm them, because it has been my experience that computers quarantine stuff I send on occasion, and I never know when. I would suggest that if we e-mail, we have a physical call to confirm reception. Except that I can't talk to anybody about the fax. I can't even call and say, did you get this? Because I can't talk to anybody about the fax.

Let me suggest that when you're dealing with a law enforcement issue, you are not prohibited from talking to field agents. They usually don't tell you very much, but you are not prohibited from talking to them because they are not involved in the trial of fact. The people you need to be prohibited

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from trying to prejudice are the commissioners. You should not prohibit enormous communication about the facts between the legal counsel. I need to be able to communicate with your legal counsel about what the facts are. You just prohibited me from it. I don't see the basis of the way you have structured what you're doing. I don't see it having any reflection anywhere else in American jurisprudence or Indian jurisprudence.

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Because I don't get to know what's going on, I don't get to talk to anybody about what's happened or the basis. I've got a FOIA request capability, but I can't send it because it violates your rules. I simply think, like Liz, this needs to be rethought.

I'm not trying to be critical. I think your legal staff has written it from their perspective, but I don't think any of those people ever was involved on the other side. There are facts and circumstances that need to be discussed between counsel, and lots of times decisions can be reached. Informal resolutions can be had, if we have lots of discussions.

Finally, I'd like to have a section on what you are going to say is okay to recuse your

commissioners. Because if I've got to go hire somebody that's Steffani's sister, brother or cousin in order to get Steffani recused, because I think she's going to vote against me, I just want to know what I've got to go do.

Some of you all are looking pretty solemn faced. It is no secret that there been lots of folks in the past who hired people related to commissioners, so the commissioner couldn't rule on their issues.

I'm Chickasaw, there is no way Steffani could ever rule on a Chickasaw issue. I know that already, but I'd like to have the rules published as to what else. If the commissioner's daughter is an attorney and I hire her, does that mean he's recused? There ought to be some easy rules that everybody sees, that everybody knows and That would make all of our lives understands. easier. And I would suggest like Liz, that we have a roundtable discussion before we advance this There are those of us that have been here since Tony Hope. We have seen debacles. We would like to help you prevent them in the future and also put us in a position that everybody's got a good set of due process rules to go by.

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1 MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. Barbara.

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MS. COLLIER SMITH: Barbara Collier,
Quapaw Tribe. Could you, Lael or Steffani, give a
little background on what the intent might have been
in that? Is there an intent? I would hope to think
that wasn't really as driven as what it appears to
be. But oftentimes even as a commissioner,
notification or consultation with legal counsel at
NIGC has been a necessity even for me. And so
prohibitive action, if that's what the intent of
that is, for whatever reason, would be, kind of a
stifling effect on probably proceeding with
clarification of an issue. So, I would like a
little more background, possibly, on what the intent
is and if that indeed was what it was. There
probably does need to be some clarification.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Sure. The ex parte communication, we included that in there because we have experienced, the commission has experienced, people attempting to lobby them on issues that are before them, aggressively, sort of willfully. And it is very uncomfortable, and it's not appropriate.

So when we were drafting these, I think it was the chairwoman who said, "We need to make sure that it is clear that there should be no ex parte

communications." Now perhaps we drafted it, we didn't draft it as expertly as we wanted to. We did borrow language from other agencies. And to be clear, there is a definition of what ex parte communication is. And that would be, "A communication directly or indirectly regarding an issue in the proceedings other than a communication necessary to a procedural aspect of maintaining orderly process with any person employed by the agency, without notice and opportunity for all parties to participate."

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We were trying to make sure that if someone has something to say, then they say it to everybody involved. So if we need to clarify that definition, then we certainly can. And then on page 4 and 5, it says what ex parte communications are prohibited, and it says that, "A party's limited participation in person representative outside the agency may not make or knowingly cause to be made to any commission member or employee, any ex parte communication in connection with any issue of fact, law or discretion relevant to the preceding."

So again, what we were trying to do, what we were trying to say, is that if you have something to say that's relevant to this case, if you are trying

to, and oftentimes, I think the point is well taken, that this is a proceeding that's not oftentimes the tribe talking to NIGC. So, there wouldn't be anyone else, sort of, that they would need to talk to. that you are not lobbying the commissioners to make a decision your way. You're not telling the agency something that you should be telling all the parties.

Trying to keep this process open and not subject to, sort of, lobbying on decisions, which is the concern that we heard when we were drafting from the commission. They don't like it. It's not appropriate. Figure out a way to make that stop. So, maybe we were too aggressive in how we defined it and how we worded it. And we can take that back, but trying to keep the level of appropriateness and communication when something is pending before the commission, when an appeal is pending before the commission.

MS. COLLIER SMITH: Okay, it would be my request then that possibly you look at this for rewording and place in it the verbiage that you're trying to prohibit. Because on occasion, commissioner to attorney on an issue, whatever the issue is, might not need to, or it might prohibit

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action later on of the whole commission, if it needed to be taken on the issue legally that we were discussing with your legal counsel.

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Especially on that. I mean I've had that happen personally, where I wouldn't want to discuss all of those things, nor would I need to take your time to do it on issues that came before the commission. So I think - I'm not a lawyer - so I don't know, but I think verbiage could be, maybe defined a little more clearly. Thank you.

MS. COCHRAN: Well, you may not be a lawyer, but you certainly have a great deal of experience. That's what you hire lawyers for, is to find the verbiage, sometimes in Latin. Judy, I know you've been waiting.

MS. SHAPIRO: As bizarre as it may seem,
I agree with Jess and Elizabeth, that I think a
roundtable would be very useful to bounce things
off. Particularly, it might be good to include
people who practice before other agencies. We are a
pretty close group here, and we know how we haven't
liked it at the NIGC. But there are lawyers,
especially in D.C., who have much more experience
with agency practice, ex parte rules and like that.
I know of some agencies that will prohibit ex parte

communications with the commissioners after a certain point in a proceeding. So, everyone knows that they can talk up to this time and then the door closes.

There are rules which say you can do ex parte communications, but you have to note in the record that you have had this communication and the substance of it, within X days of having had it. It has to be filed with the agency.

I think, perhaps to clarify some of what I was saying before, another useful distinction you might make as you define proceeding, and proceeding for the purposes of ex parte communication, is that it not include, not include interaction which is only between the commission and the tribe.

We're talking about a very special relationship there. There are no adverse parties. There is nobody that you are keeping secrets from. And if the intention is to reach an amicable conclusion, a voluntary compliance of whatever needs to be done, then you really do need, as Barbara was saying, as Jess was saying, as Elizabeth was saying, you need to have open communication and not have it damped down by uncertainty of whether you are violating a rule.

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Then of course, there is the question of what happens if you violate a rule? What does that mean? I mean you have prohibited it, what does that mean? Do you lose? Are you sanctioned? I don't know that there is a sanction ability within the commission for violating of its procedural rules anyway. So, I'm not sure really what that would mean. I'm not sure I want to ask that question.

Those are the main things. There is another element which is missing from your process here. Which is when the commission fails to act. are times when the commission has before it a management contract. And maybe not so much these days, but it used to take years. There plenty of times when it goes into the black hole, and there needs to be a process to compel agency action. it needs to be between, not from outsiders, but as between the requesting party and the agency, without having to go to federal court. If you are not going to build in timelines for submissions of various things, approval of management contracts, approval of ordinances already under the statute, but there are times when the commission doesn't act. And someone has to be able to say, wait a minute this is important, and here's why it's important, and we

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shouldn't have to go to federal court to make that happen. So, that is my addition.

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MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. We are right up on the lunch hour-

MS. TAYLOR: I'm sorry. I've been waiting to speak. Could I speak briefly, please?

MS. COCHRAN: Absolutely.

MS. TAYLOR: Leslie Taylor, for the Delaware Nation. As a practicing attorney, in every court that I've ever practiced before, if there was ever a change in the rules or an addition to the rules, the judges in that court typically formed a committee and allowed attorneys to sit down and talk about the rules and their practical application. And that's so you don't have to come back later and explain to the judge why you violated a rule because there is no other way to comply with the rule.

I'm concerned in this aspect, and I agree with Ms. Homer and Mr. Green, but this very broad ex parte communication definition is punishable by your appeal being dismissed. That is a huge action. It seems here, you get a show cause hearing as to why your appeal should not be dismissed or denied, but there would be no discovery process involved in that either. So, if you take this to the furthest

extent, let's say we had an appeal pending, and I call general counsel for the commission to ask her a question, then I have violated your rule and my case can be dismissed for simply trying to communicate with counsel. I think that's a good example of why we should have a roundtable. Thank you.

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MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. I appreciate that. And I want to be clear that these are discussion drafts only. We put them out specifically, to generate discussion. It's not even a draft notice of proposed rulemaking, so I appreciate the example that you gave. You're right, judges do sit down with attorneys and discuss. And this with the agency's first attempt, because obviously, this wouldn't come from Indian country. It has to come from us. So, there has been some really good thoughts put out that need to be brought up in a larger context.

And I'm going to go ahead and break. It's not to cut off, it's just I need to stay on track, especially because we've got some oversight hearings going on. It doesn't mean that we won't come back, and if you've thought about more, we want more discussion. We've got time for that. I don't want to cut that off. I'm trying very diligently to stay

on our agenda, so if you want to reconvene here at 1:30, we will. We can pick up wherever you want to pick up, and I wish you a very good lunch.

(WHEREUPON, A break was taken.)

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MS. COCHRAN: Good afternoon and welcome back. I expected that this would be very, very light. So, if you want to come sit at the table, please join us. This is not going to be big on protocol this afternoon. So Joe, Judy, I won't put you on the spot, but if you want to come join us, please do.

I think what we'll do this afternoon, at least this first part of the afternoon, unless there's any concerns to the contrary, since there's so few of us here, is I'd like to have Lael go through the next set of regulations, just the PowerPoint presentation. And just outline it, and then Chairwoman Stevens will be speaking at 2:15, before the Senate Committee of Indian Affairs. I think we can have Lael's computer pulled up, up here, and I'd like to watch her testimony. Only 15 minutes or so, so that can be our break and then, we'll get right back into discussions. Of course, I'll go back to anything under Group 2 that you have comments about, especially because I know the lawyers are present

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with us.

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So, it is now just about a quarter till 2:00. We've got about 30 minutes, so Lael, I'm going to turn it over to you. If you would, walk us through Group 4, and then we'll go from there.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: All right. Group 4, as you can see, covers Parts 556 and 558. This is commonly known as the pilot program for licensing: background investigations and licensing for primary management officials and key employees.

Part 571, monitoring investigations, this has to do with access to documents stored off-site.

Part 537, background investigations for persons having a financial interest in class II and class III management contracts. And then Part 502, we had a definition come up that we wanted to talk about.

So you have this in your packet, this is Parts 556 and 558. This is our attempt to formalize the pilot program, which 95 percent of tribes participate in. And so we figured, it's been around a long time. It's probably not a pilot program any more, and maybe we should go ahead and formalize it into a regulation. So, that's what we did.

It allows tribes to submit a notice of results of background investigations, and then maintain the

applications, investigative reports, on their site.

Only send us a notice of results and notice of

licensing once that's happened for primary

management officials and key employees.

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All the comments that we received were in support of this regulation. So, we went ahead and put the draft together that you have in your handouts. The other thing that we tried to do was, 556 includes all the procedures before gaming license is issued.

Part 558 includes all the procedure that occur after a license has been issued. So, we tried to make this a little clear. It was a little muddy, because things were kind of mixed up between 556 and 558. So we tried to clarify, and of course, we think it's perfect but if you don't, please let us know.

So, Part 556 basically goes over that a tribe seeking to license a key employee or primary management official. You have to notify the agency of the background results no later than 60 days after the applicant begins to work.

We also provided in here a mechanism for a second tribe. So, say someone is moving from employment at one tribe to another tribe. And we

were in the southwest, and so I used the illustration of Sandia and Isleta. They are very close to each other. It's very likely that one employee might go from one tribe to the other. And if Isleta can get the background results from Sandia and simply update them, then that seemed to make sense to us. So, rather than have tribes repeat background investigations, go through that whole rigmarole when it's already been done, and instead simply update the materials and then send us a notice of results, then that seemed to make sense. And that's what we provided for in part 556.4 (b).

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Part 558 includes all the procedures after the gaming license has been issued. One of the other things that I need to point out here, is that the statute requires . . . now this was an oversight on our part. When we put together the pilot program and we had been doing this for a very long time, we've run into a couple of things.

Number one, there is no consistency in, sort of, how this happens in regions. We don't have a single standardized form, notice of results form, and so we are working on that.

The other thing that was overlooked was that we simply required tribes to submit the notice of

results to us. Well, the statute requires that the notice of results be submitted to the agency, but also that a notice of licensure has been issued to the agency or that has been sent to the agency as well.

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We weren't doing that before, so that is a little bit different, and we're trying to figure out a way to do that, so it's not cumbersome. Perhaps we can do it by e-mail. That would make a lot of sense. But it is, sort of, two notifications, and that is new under the pilot program. Even though it's old because it started with the statute. It was an oversight on our part.

So, part 558 includes all the procedures that happened after a gaming licenses is issued. So, after sending us a notice of results, a tribe can license a key employee or the primary management official. The tribe notifies the commission, and within 30 days, the NIGC can request additional information and either object or not object.

Now, one of the things that we also need to point out is that if the tribe sends in a notice of result to the agency and issues a license shortly thereafter, and then the agency comes back and says, "Hey, look we have an issue with this particular

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individual." If the license has already been issued, then the employee has a right to a notice and a hearing. Their license will be suspended, and they have the right to go to a hearing, and then the commission decides whether or not to allow the licensee to keep the license or to revoke it and then notify the agency.

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If the tribe waits for 30 days to hear back from the agency and doesn't issue the license, then the licensee, the applicant, doesn't have that same right to a hearing. So, the right to a hearing only kicks in once a license has been issued. So, there is some areas of timing that I think the agencies are familiar with, the TGRAs know how to work that. But it's something we wanted to point out.

Okay, and the other thing we did was availability of electronic submissions. We're working on that now. Hopefully, we'll come up with a system that's not cumbersome and make sure that everyone receives all the documents that they need.

The other point that we need to make in 556.8 and 558.6, we simply say, "Your tribal ordinance may not comply with this right now. That's okay, it doesn't need to. But if you go back in and amend your ordinance, make sure you update it and include

this the next time you submit an ordinance for approval." Written comment period for this closes on August 10th.

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Going back to fingerprint processing. The notice of inquiry asked whether or not the NIGC shall allow access to fingerprint processing for any employee designated by the tribe. Comments we received supported this, and so we are talking to the . . . is that thunder? Oh, plane, sorry. Thunder makes me nervous, I'm not used to it. Comments supported this, so we are talking to the FBI, because that's who we work with. And based on your points earlier, the BIA seems like another place that we could go for processing, fingerprint processing.

Moving along, Part 537. You do have a draft of this in your materials. The notice of inquiry asked whether or not the NIGC should clarify that management contractors of class II and class III facilities must have a completed background investigation. Most people supported this clarification, simply to just put it out there that if you are a management contractor of a hybrid facility, that you still have to do the background investigation. Others said this is covered by

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compacts. Not a lot of controversy on this particular issue.

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One of the things, one of the questions that was raised was how can the process for licensing be streamlined while still maintaining the integrity of the process? And then, who would qualify for the streamlined process. This makes some sense to the agency, so in Part 537.1(D) the discussion draft provides that the chair may exercise discretion and reduce the background investigation requirements for any tribe, tribally owned entity, national bank or institutional investor that is federally regulated or required to undergo background investigations and licensure by a state or tribe, pursuant to a compact.

So for those parties that are already backgrounded and heavily regulated, the chair has the discretion to, sort of, reduce the background requirements, perhaps make it less duplicative and have it be a little more streamlined. That was in response to what we heard from the comments.

Written comment on this draft closes August 9th.

Part 531, there is no draft regulation in your handouts for this. This had to do with collateral agreements, so agreements collateral to a management

contract. The notice of inquiry asked whether or not the agency should require tribes to submit all their collateral agreements to management contracts. We heard just a range of support and not supportive of this particular issue. We didn't come up with a draft. We haven't come up with a draft yet, and we're still looking for input.

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We heard concerns about the length of time it would take, given the length of time it already takes for a management agreement, management contracts to be approved or disapproved, concerns that it would discourage private investment, concern that the NIGC doesn't have the authority to approve collateral agreements, that this would be second guessing business decisions, and that it should be left to the discretion of the tribe.

On the other hand, we heard that the trust responsibility requires review and approval of these agreements. It protects tribal sole proprietary interests and that it could discourage a business from attempting to take advantage of a tribe, and that the approval reduces risk to both parties.

Given the variety of comments, we still are looking for input, but we haven't come up with a draft yet. And no decision has been made on whether

to issue a draft.

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Part 571, you have a copy of this in your, discussion draft of this in your handouts. And this is in response to the notice of inquiry whether to clarify the NIGC has access to papers, books and records, including at sites maintained by third parties.

This came from concerns, from comments from tribes that say management contractors, some third-party has their records; they can't get them. The NIGC does have subpoena authority, but perhaps there should be some clarification in the regulations that the NIGC has the same access to all the records that it should have access to, even if they are off-site, not at the gaming facility.

We also included in this section what's called an investigation closure letter. This is in Part 571.4. This came from the concern given to us by tribes that they would've had an investigation, things were going on and happening, and then all of a sudden nothing, for years. And there are some disclosure requirements, I understand, lending agreements, if you're under investigation, etc., etc. and there needed to be some finality in the process. So in Part 571, we attempted to do that.

So it says, "Where the NIGC has concluded its investigation and will not begin an enforcement action, the commission may advise the party by letter that the investigation has been concluded." It is not a finding that there is no violation. It simply is saying that we've concluded this particular investigation, and it doesn't preclude further action.

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So far we haven't had much comment on this. I think tribes have been generally supportive of this. We have had concerns about what it is called. And perhaps we should change it from an investigation closure letter, because that sounds awfully like a temporary closure order, maybe to an investigation termination or conclusion or something different than closure because closure contains some connotations in our context here. Okay, so written comment on this closes on August 9th as well.

And then the final part of this particular group has to do with the definition section, particularly whether or not the definition of net revenues, with respect to how management fees are calculated, be revised to be consistent with GAAP.

The same concerns that we talked about earlier in the fee section about GAAP. It doesn't

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necessarily comply with IGRA. That we can get to this a different way, but that we should leave the definition of net revenue alone, and make sure that it complies with IGRA. So again, there is no draft. We haven't come up with a draft or made a decision about whether we are going to issue a draft or not on that. So, that is all of Group 4.

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MS. COCHRAN: Thank you Lael. Although there's many parts in this grouping, most of them are very isolated kind of discussions, aiming at one provision or two provisions within the part. So hopefully, we can get through them fairly quickly. Before we go to a break, for a few moments and see if we can't pull up the Senate Committee, is there anybody that wants to say something or has a question? If not, then it may take us a few minutes to get our connection, and hopefully, we can see it up here on the big screen. Then we'll go ahead and go off the record. We'll take a break.

(WHEREUPON, A break was taken.)

MS. COCHRAN: All right, since they've gone into the business meeting, we'll go ahead and get a little bit further into our agenda, while we wait for the news feed to come in.

The first two parts in Group 4, as Lael laid

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out, are 556 and 558, which is the background and licensing of our primary management officials and key employees. And the intent of the commission here is, of course, to formalize the pilot program in such a way that we bring some uniformity into the regions, and we make what is a process that's currently engaged in by 99 percent of the tribes already. So, is there any discussion or do you have any comments? Does it work for you? Do you have concerns about the fact that we broke out 556 and 558 to the processes that occur before the license is issued? And then the secondary part being processes after the license is issued? It seemed to make sense, but I want to make sure.

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In 556.4, is there any additional information that - and this is a pretty exhaustive list, but if the intent is to try to get to open up this information to other tribal entities, so that you quit paying over and over again for these people to be backgrounded - is there any additional requirements we might consider including in there that's useful as you look at your applications? It's a fairly exhaustive list, but.

We've put this question out in other areas of the country, just to again get feedback. Are we

missing something? Since this regulation was first enacted, that we're not asking about the current practice, says would be useful, especially because the people that you're intending to try to perhaps catch in the licensing process, I'm sure are becoming more creative in how they are applying.

MR. CARROLL: Yeah, Bob Carroll. Just one suggestion. This may be a little picyune, but on Item Number 7 on your checklist there, it indicates the name and address of any licensing or regulatory agency with which a person has filed an application, on and on. It says whether such license or permit was granted. You might want to just expand that to also include was license ever suspended or revoked?

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. One of the other questions that we wanted to engage in with the tribes has to do with the idea of a no objection to licensing letter. We don't know how many tribes actually wait to hear back from us before they license. Many don't. They'll do temporary licenses or other types of things. But there are some that will. Would it be helpful for us to consider such a document, maybe coming out of the regional offices? Is it just additional paperwork that wouldn't be useful?

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I don't think there's a whole lot of tribes that wait, but if there are, then we certainly want to make sure that we are responding.

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Are there any other concerns about the NIGC that you might have, in releasing information to other tribes that you can think of? In different parts of the country there are concerns by some tribes which . . . they're concerned actually about legal liability. If it's associated with their licensing, and that information is subsequently shared, and it turns out to be inaccurate or false. That could create a legal liability. Others say we can do waivers in our application. So, there's ways that you can address it. Others just feel it's proprietary information that they have paid for, perhaps, to obtain. There's a lot of different reasons, but there are many, many who say we have no problem. If a background has been run, we have no problem sharing that information with other tribes upon request. Is there any concern you want to bring to the table? Should we notify the tribe that we have released it?

MR. MICHAEL: In the practice of non-Indian gaming law, it is very common for different regulatory agencies to share information

and cooperate between different state jurisdictions where they have done a complete background, and the same person is applying there. And they have working relationships, each with the other.

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This is a little bit different, because it's not necessarily just, we're talking about the tribal gaming agency sharing with another tribal gaming agency. It wouldn't be the NIGC making available to any tribal gaming agency the information that the tribe has supplied to the NIGC, or both?

MS. ECHO-HAWK: We've been talking about that, and in this context, it would be the information that tribes have submitted to us. One of the issues that we've heard, and we've actually talked to Nevada about this, is how do we share information in a way that is meaningful for tribes and helpful, so you are not duplicating things. And what is it, TAPS or TIMS or some, we have some database, TAPS, TIMS, I don't know what, it's an acronym that starts with a T.

That may not be as useful as we would like it to be. The same with vendors for example, because this is only for prime management officials and key employees. But Coca-Cola has been licensed by thousands of gaming operations, and do we really

need to go through that whole thing again? we've been trying to think about ways to do that.

Now, we included in there just for clarification purposes that we can give this information out to tribes or other requesting, I quess they're civil and criminal regulatory authorities. We wanted to be clear and let people know that it is something we can do, the same as they can do if they request.

MR. MICHAEL: Some of that might depend on different situations on what representations have been made to the applicant in the first place. have on forms a privacy notice, and if that notice says that it will not be shared, it would be hard then to share the information. Or we would have to revise the notice. It's certainly a good idea. would be very efficient to be able to have a sharing relationship for the information. Obviously, we'd have to work around the privacy implications.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: Well, the privacy notice that is required to be included on your form, that's where we added that the NIGC can release information. So they sign it. Assuming they read it, they are put on notice that we can release this information.

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MS. COCHRAN: And there has been some 1 2. discussion about, again, looking at the proper role of NIGC within IGRA's boundaries, staying within our 3 lane. We're not the licensing entity. It's the 5 tribes. In this case, we would be a pass through. Is that an appropriate function of this agency? 6 can see arguments on both sides, and it's been argued both ways. That's why we wanted to bring it 8 out to you, because we know it would be helpful. And we want to make our agency achieve its other 10 11 purpose, which is to foster growth in Indian gaming. 12 So, we want to do that, within our lane. 13

MR. MICHAEL: One other thought occurs to me. Guy Michael, Chitimacha. With respect to the revision in the privacy notice, can that be retroactive? What happens to people who applied before the privacy notice was changed? And can you only share the information with the new people who signed the privacy notice when it was amended or both, all of them?

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MS. COCHRAN: That's a good question. 558 is again, once the license has been issued. And Lael has gone through the changes. Is there any initial comments? We do have highlighted in the draft under 558.2 Subsection C, Subsection 2, the

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question of whether or not it's mandatory or permissive if a tribe does not license an applicant, that the tribe shall notify the commission and either shall or may forward copies of its eligibility determination to the commission for inclusion in the record system. And again, this does get in to discussions about the content of the decision that's made when the tribe doesn't license the applicant. The information that may attach to that determination. Questions? Well, that's the pilot program. Again, not a whole lot there. The NOI- yes, please?

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MR. CARROLL: Just for the record, again on behalf of Chitimacha, we have employed the pilot program for several years, and it has worked very, very well. Between the NIGC staff and our tribal commission staff, they've worked out a good system of both communication and transfer of information. So, we do commend that original project, and it has worked up to this point. Just for the record.

MS. COCHRAN: Thank you. Part 571, monitoring investigations. This spurred some discussion more recently out in the Southwest.

Regarding the NIGC's access to papers, books, records, including at sites maintained by third

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The comments that we got in from the NOI parties. were again all over the place. Understand it reflects the different concerns in different regions. There is some who put forward that there is a need for this, that they are having trouble accessing their own records at their sites, third-party sites. There was also some comments that came back from the NOI which asked that the section be revised to specifically exclude access to any class III records. They were concerned about the class III records. They felt like, on the other end of the spectrum, NIGC should have access to any gaming records of any nature, anywhere. And the discussion that stemmed in from that in Albuquerque also had to do with again, the authority of the NIGC to do that.

If you look at 571.5, Subsection A, we included the terminology, "Or any other person." Which is defined . . . I want to get this right. Yeah, it's under Subsection 2, "Person, means an individual, Indian tribe, corporation, partnership or other organization or entity." And the discussion really had to do with whether or not the agency truly has that level of authorities. As it was classified out there, it was do you really have authority to enter

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anywhere, any time for any reason? And that may or may not be true, so I wanted to bring that to your attention for the lawyers in the room in particular.

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MR. MICHAEL: Would that concern be ameliorated if this were limited to the licensed premises?

MS. COCHRAN: Say that again.

MR. MICHAEL: Would the concern about the broadness of the NIGC's authority be addressed at all if you limited that authority solely to the licensed premises?

MS. ECHO-HAWK: That was, sort of, the reason for the reg, was that tribes and the NIGC sometimes would request information from say a management contractor held in Vegas, for example. And they couldn't get it. They would say you don't have authority or whatever.

So, we wanted to clarify that we have access to all that.

MS. COCHRAN: Now, there is another line of thought that goes along with that. Which is agency, you have subpoen authority. This is really unnecessary. If you need it that badly, then you have existing authorities.

The other comment that came out of the

Southwest Region and Talalip, actually up in the Northwest, was including in that 571.5 provision that would allow notifications of the tribes. So, that if we were to go to third party places, that we notify the tribe in advance that we are going to seek records on behalf of their operation.

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MR. CARROLL: If I may? My first instinct, I come from a law enforcement background, it just seems to me that might have some constitutional issues there, alone. Primarily based on the entry aspect. If it's needed to gather records from a third party location, particularly a license holder, we would always, even in our applications and our licenses, certain required waivers are made, they give access. Those accesses, broad as they are, have limitations.

I would think here with the definition of person itself being relatively broad, whether one person would have authority to waive, for example, a corporate or partnership's, its rights and so forth, would be a sperate issue.

But I just think that's going to have to be tightened up, maybe in the area of even the entry. If it can be tied to the licensee or the person to whom there is an affiliation with the tribe,

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contractual or otherwise, if that person can waive whatever rights they have, but it has to be related to that contract and so forth. I think I'd feel safer, in terms of future use of that, if it becomes something that would be needed for an evidence point of view.

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Because a person granting entry to the premises of any other person, even if it's a third party. I mean that does include legal representatives and CPAs and whatever else that might be involved in the company. Then you're hitting privilege as well as Fourth Amendment issues. It seems a little broad. I mean just for your own protection.

MS. COCHRAN: Well, thank you. Along that same lines, I just recall now another conversation that was had about the relationship that would have to entities which might have liens. Valid liens against the tribal entity. That we may infringe upon other legal rights, we may not necessarily have the authority for. So, thank you.

But above that in 571.4, the investigation closure letter, Lael pointed out terminology. There was a suggestion made that we get away from perhaps the term, "Closure," because it does have a very

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distinct meaning within our regulations. And that we consider some other terminology: conclusion, investigation conclusion letter, perhaps.

Under 571.6, Subsection D, we've received some feedback on this, asking whether or not, again, whether or not that was within the authorities of the commission. But also there was a request within this whole section, that there seems to be an emphasis in the existing language that materials be made available at a time and place convenient to the commission only. It was a request whether or not we would consider some language which would allow proper recognition of tribal lands and entry upon tribal lands. And that there be convenience requests to both parties. We said we would bring that out in the discussion. So that is 571. Is there any other comments?

Part 531 involves the content of management contracts, and of course, this was brought out during the NOI. Questions regarding whether or not the commission should approve collateral agreements to management contracts. And if so, what would be our authority for that? Should we revise the part, this particular part, to require submission approval of collateral agreements to management contracts?

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We don't have a draft reg on this. There is no draft. It is purely for discussion right now.

MR. MICHAEL: Chitimacha. We had submitted a comment in this area about the possibility of addressing the Wells Fargo decision by excluding banks that make loans to tribes in management agreements in the ordinary course of business. And I guess that's, hopefully, that's something that you will consider in evaluating what types of collateral agreements, if any, need to be reviewed by the commission.

Obviously, that's created some unease in the lending community, as to what needs to be on a loan agreement to avoid being deemed a manager.

MS. ECHO-HAWK: And that's something that we've been thinking about quite a bit. In fact, Larry Roberts, general counsel, he always wants us to say that we are not reviewing old agreements at this time, simply because we are waiting for the 7th Circuit to make their decision. But that if you have new agreements or agreements that you're entering into, that the sooner you can get them to us the better, if you want them reviewed. So, he always tells us to say that.

The collateral agreement issue has obviously

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alarmed some people; other people like it. One of the questions that is always asked is, "Well what is a collateral agreement?" And that's a very good question.

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So, those are the things that we're hearing from tribes. No draft yet, it seems we haven't been able to, sort of, come up with a one-size-fits-all and there are some concerns that we're thinking about internally. The time that it takes to review management agreements is quite lengthy. To review and approve all these other collateral agreements, it's not required by the act. The act says, management agreements only. We're considering the concerns that we may be overstepping our authority and interfering in the business decisions of tribes. So, all of those things have come up and haven't been resolved yet. Of course, tribes are all over the board too, so you know.

MS. COCHRAN: Is there any other thoughts or comments?

Part 537, involving background investigations. The essence of this part, as you well know, is to ensure that the chair has the information that she needs that's necessary to conduct a background determination. We want to make sure that this part

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reflects that overall approach.

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The draft rule, the one thing that we wanted to bring out, in particular for you, to discuss under the draft rule, does include section 537.1. I may get lost in my subsections here. Well, page 4, 4 D it looks like. And this would grant the chair discretion to reduce the background investigation that would be furnished by the tribe. So that the burden is, the redundancies are taken out of the background submissions, and the burden is lifted a little bit.

The feedback that we've received on this particular language is it's been well-received. And that's one way that we wanted to streamline some of the things that are going on, without compromising the integrity of the process. That's absolutely not the intent here.

Is there any comments or concerns? If there is none, then we will finish up very quickly. It looks like they're getting ready to start.

Part 502, the last part in this group, does deal with definitions. We asked in the NOI whether or not we should change the definition of net revenues to more closely match terminology used in GAAP. And the response has not been favorable to

do that. Did you want to, or do you have any additional comments or thoughts? That is it. I know that's a fast and furious. But these issues, I know the appeals provisions are new and may take you some time to look at and to go through. But some of this other stuff has been around for a while.

So, if there's any final comment on any provision that you've seen, any of the discussion drafts that are out there?

Well, I think we'll go ahead and end the meeting so that we can focus on the chairwoman's presentation. Again, I want to thank you for coming out. I appreciate your time. I know we'll do this again tomorrow. We'll get into the MICS and technical standards. So, I appreciate your time. Thank you for joining us, chairman. Thank each of you for joining us. I look forward to our time tomorrow, and we'll go ahead and go off the record. (WHEREUPON, The meeting was concluded at 2:37 p.m., pursuant to reconvening on Friday, July 29th, 2011 at 9:00 a.m.)

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