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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dustin Thomas Appointed as Self-Regulation Director

WASHINGTON, D.C. August 1, 2023 – Today, the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) Chairman E. Sequoyah Simermeyer appointed Dustin Thomas (Mohawk/Oneida) as the Director of NIGC’s Office of Self-regulation (OSR). The appointment is effective immediately.

He replaces NIGC Vice Chair Jeannie Hovland, who directed the office since October 2021. Thomas will also continue to serve as the NIGC’s Chief of Staff.

Hovland welcomed the appointment and highlighted the Agency’s ongoing outreach efforts. “Over the past year, we have consolidated our resources on [NIGC.gov](https://www.nigc.gov) to better serve self-regulated tribes. Under Dustin’s leadership, the OSR will continue to expand its targeted outreach efforts to tribes who are well-position to take the next steps toward self-regulation,” said Hovland. “During consultation on Self-Regulation, tribes expressed the importance of allowing the Chair to appoint an OSR director that is not a commissioner to support a seamless process from certificate issuance to post certificate compliance. I am proud to support this request and I am confident that Dustin will do an excellent job as the Director.”

Prior to becoming Chief of Staff in September 2020, Thomas served as Acting Chief of Staff and as Director of Compliance, where he monitored compliance of tribal gaming operations, which encompasses eight regional offices and the audit and training programs. Thomas began his gaming career in 2005 as a Security Officer for the Seneca Gaming Corporation, where he eventually became the Lead Gaming Inspector for the Seneca Gaming Authority, overseeing regulatory compliance for the Seneca Gaming Corporation and Seneca Gaming and Entertainment. Before joining NIGC in 2017, he also served as the Chief Risk and Compliance Officer for the Potawatomi Hotel and Casino, where he was the senior executive for operational compliance, internal audit, security, and health and safety.

“I am excited for the opportunity to collaborate with tribes on self-regulation opportunities and look forward to building on the successes and initiatives of prior Office of Self-Regulation Directors,” said Thomas.

Simermeyer, also a former OSR director, noted tribal self-regulation provisions in the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) are an acknowledgement of tribes’ governmental sovereignty, and NIGC is fortunate to have Thomas at the helm of this critical office. “Dustin’s proven leadership, organizational planning ability, regulatory experience, and business acumen are all valuable assets for strengthening the NIGC self-regulation program. His talents will prepare the NIGC for future work in this area, maximize federal law maker’s intent in supporting tribes’ regulatory capacity, and be a point of pride for the gaming industry,” said Simermeyer.

Under IGRA, NIGC may issue a certificate of self-regulation to tribes that qualify. Self-regulation is based in part on lawmakers’ expectations and tribal leaders’ insistence that those tribal governments with a strong and

proven history of gaming regulatory capacity would be able to meet the IGRA’s objectives with less federal regulation.

This appointment also reflects tribal leaders’ desire for a non-commission member of the agency to lead the office—a perspective tribal leaders expressed as part of the Agency’s consultation with tribal leaders that concluded in 2022 and resulted in the Commission issuing new regulations regarding the Chairman’s appointment of the OSR director.

To learn more about Self-Regulation, visit <https://www.nigc.gov/utility/office-of-self-regulation>.

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The National Indian Gaming Commission’s mission is to support tribal self-sufficiency and the integrity of Indian gaming through effective regulation. Together with tribes and states, the NIGC regulates more than 500 gaming establishments operated by nearly 250 tribes across 29 states. To learn more, visit www.nigc.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).