



Notice of Settlement Agreement with St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin

WASHINGTON, DC, Wednesday, August 26, 2020 – The National Indian Gaming Commission Chairman E. Sequoyah Simermeyer and the St. Croix Chippewa of Wisconsin have settled a Civil Fine Assessment entered against the Tribe for violations enumerated in NIGC Notice of Violation NOV-19-02. Pursuant to the Settlement Agreement, the Tribe has conceded the violations listed in the NOV and has agreed to several measures designed to ensure that such misuses of gaming revenue will not reoccur. In exchange, Chairman Simermeyer has agreed to a reduced fine, with a suspension of a portion of it pending adherence to the terms of the Agreement.

NOV-19-02 was issued on April 11, 2019, and charged the Tribe with 527 violations of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, NIGC Regulations, and the Tribe’s gaming ordinance specific to misuse of net gaming revenue by a number of tribal officials, including then Tribal Chairman Lewis Taylor, and Gaming Commission Chairman Jeff Taylor. The enumerated violations exposed a substantial breach of the trust placed in Tribal leadership by the St. Croix Chippewa Tribe. The misappropriation of this revenue by the named individuals deprived vital tribal programs and government operations of at least \$1.5 million in needed revenue. As a result, the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin received a civil fine of \$5.5 million.

In the time since the NOV and CFA was issued, however, the Tribe elected new Tribal council representatives, including a new Tribal Chairman. In addition, those representatives have ensured that tribal employees named in the NOV are no longer involved in the gaming or have any control over the gaming revenue. The Tribe has also committed to numerous remedial measures, including: annual independent audits for use of revenues; eliminating ad hoc payments from the casino for tribal expenses; creating and administering annual ethics and use of revenues trainings; prohibiting named individuals from entering into a gaming related contract or gaming related employment with the Tribe; and pursuing repayment of the misused revenues from named individuals.

In light of the Tribe’s demonstrated commitment to reform and the hardships visited industry-wide by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chairman agreed to reduce the total fine to \$4.5 million. Up to \$3.5 million of the fine can be forgiven, provided the Tribe implements several remedial measures to prevent future revenue misuse and recapture misused revenue.

“IGRA created the NIGC to help protect against threats to Indian gaming. This includes threats to a tribe’s ability to generate the gaming revenue used to empower its community. The provisions agreed to in the settlement are positive and productive steps to improve the protections for the Tribe. These provisions aim to remediate the circumstances that gave rise to the violations outlined in the NOV,” Chairman Simermeyer said about the agreement.

Simermeyer went on to say, “The NIGC team’s diligence in this matter demonstrates the Agency’s dedication to IGRA’s mandates.”

The Notice of Violation, Civil Fine Assessment, and Settlement Agreement can be found on the NIGC’s [website](#).

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The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act created the [National Indian Gaming Commission](#) to support tribal self-sufficiency and the integrity of Indian gaming. NIGC oversees the efficient regulation of 527 gaming establishments operated by 247 tribes across 29 states.