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NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN TESTIFIES BEFORE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM INTERNAL CONTROL STANDARDS

NIGA Urges Congress to Direct NIGC to Work with Tribes and States on Class III Gaming Regulation

(Washington, DC, May 11, 2006) – Before the House Resources Committee Oversight Hearing today on Capitol Hill, National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) Chairman Ernest Stevens, Jr. stressed the need for Congress to work directly with Tribal governments, as well as states, with regard to Class III gaming regulation. He concluded by asking Congress to hold a series of hearings, including field hearings, which will demonstrate the strength and effectiveness of the tribal-state compact system and the existing comprehensive web of Indian gaming regulation.

Chairman Stevens expressed NIGA's concerns with a proposal to amend the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) that "will grant broad new authority to the National Indian Gaming Commission going far beyond the Minimum Internal Control Standards. Their provision will tread on states' rights and tribal sovereignty by giving them the ability to override existing tribal-state compacts. "

"Tribal governments currently dedicate tremendous resources to regulation," Stevens said. "Disrupting or adding to this process will inflate the governmental process at serious risk to Indian country, disrupting our existing and effective regulatory processes. We believe that

through consultation, the NIGC and Tribes can solve the agency's concerns about regulation, while protecting tribal sovereignty.”

According to NIGA, in 2005, Tribes spent over \$320 million nationwide on tribal, state and federal regulation. This investment funds over 3,400 federal, state and Tribal regulatory personnel with credentials; such as former FBI agents, state and Tribal law enforcement officers, military officers, accountants, auditors, bank officials and state regulators. Tribal regulation also funds state of the art surveillance and security equipment.

In his testimony, Stevens also said, “The NIGC is asking for a blank check to determine its own jurisdiction.” He then asked Congress to instead “direct the NIGC to work with Tribes and states under existing law before risking limited tribal government revenue.”

The National Indian Gaming Association is a nonprofit trade association comprised of 184 American Indian Nations and other nonvoting associate members. The mission of the NIGA is to advance the lives of Indian people economically, socially and politically. NIGA operates as a clearinghouse and educational, legislative and public policy resource for tribes, policymakers and the public on Indian gaming issues, sovereignty and tribal community development.

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