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Media Release

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National Indian Gaming Commission Announces Withdrawal of Class II Classification Standards and Definitions.

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla., June 5 - The NIGC announced today that they are withdrawing the Class II Classification Standards and Definition portions of the pending regulations. The NIGC will now consider only implementing Class II Technical Standards and Minimum Internal Control Standards.

Most importantly, the NIGC will not modify the definition of “facsimiles of any game of chance.” The proposed facsimile definition would have categorized all electronic versions of Class II games as Class III facsimiles. The withdrawal of this portion of the regulations is an important development for Indian Country. Tribal leaders had long requested that the NIGC pull these regulations from consideration until they engaged in meaningful government-to-government consultation.

Chairman Ernie Stevens of the National Indian Gaming Association cited Tribal leaders’ hard work in opposing these regulations: “Our thanks goes out to Tribal government leaders and Tribal gaming commissioners for their hard work in staying active and engaged with the NIGC and requesting consultation with Tribes prior to the development of such sweeping regulations.”

The NIGC admitted in its own economic impact study that tribal governments stand to lose approximately \$1.2 billion a year under the proposed regulations. The NIGC also stated that Tribal governments also would have faced increased compliance costs of up to \$347.9 million. Many smaller Class II operations, in States such as Montana, Alabama, and North and South Dakota, would have faced severe challenges in complying with the regulations. Additional economic losses would have resulted from the thousands of lost jobs and wages; investment losses; transition costs; reduced spending in local economies, and other direct and indirect negative economic impacts.

Stevens says NIGA and Indian Country will work with the NIGC on the remaining portions of the Class II regulations. "Working together with Indian Country, there is an opportunity to develop acceptable Class II MICS and Classification Standards that the Tribes and industry can implement without severe economic hardship."

The National Indian Gaming Association is a non-profit trade association comprised of 184 American Indian Nations and other nonvoting associate members. The mission of 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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