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National Indian Gaming Association and the California Nations Indian Gaming Association Hosts the 2010 Summer Legislative Summit on Capitol Hill

Washington, D.C. – July 26, 2010 – The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), in conjunction with the California Nations Indian Gaming Association (CNIGA), held their 2010 Summer Legislative Summit this week. The Summit took place on July 20-21, 2010 on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. More than 170 NIGA Member Tribe representatives, and Associate members traveled from around the country for the 2-day event.

Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr. welcomed the large tribal leader delegation in his opening address and said, “I appreciate that we have such a dynamic group here. It is very gratifying to look around the room and see such a great turnout of our tribal leadership and the Indian gaming industry. You are the leaders who are committed to work as a team and defend Indian Country’s interests,” Chairman Stevens stated.

Danny Tucker, Chairman of the CNIGA also provided opening welcome comments said, “This is the time that we must show our unity. We are all in this together on behalf of our Indian people and our communities.”

The Summit provided the delegates with an opportunity to meet with their Senators and Representatives to discuss critical issues confronting Tribal governments. It was also an opportunity to obtain information regarding pressing issues and concerns affecting Indian Country. Discussion topics included: Internet Gaming, Trust Land Issues, Taxation of Tribal Government Benefits, the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC), and Native American Veterans.

Throughout the course of the Summit, the delegates took part in various briefings and meetings with Tribal Leaders, members of the Senate, the NIGC, the Department of Interior and the House Native American Caucus. In addition, important regulatory matters were discussed with the Department of Interior and Administration Officials.

Jodi Gillette, Intergovernmental Affairs Director at the Whitehouse offered valuable insight during her address to Tribal Leaders. Gillette expressed her sincere appreciation towards Indian Country. "It has been a great experience working in partnership with Tribal leaders and government officials. That partnership is critical to helping Indian country. We need to move to address those challenges facing Indian Country in order to become stronger," stated Gillette.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Donald "Del" Laverdure and National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) Chairwoman Tracie Stevens also provided updates on pending issues.

Chairwoman Stevens also took the opportunity to introduce NIGC Commissioners, Vice Chairwoman Stephanie Cochran, Associate Commissioner Dan Little and also newly appointed NIGC attorney, Larry Roberts.

"The NIGC now has a full team and we are confident that they are ready to work diligently on Capitol Hill and throughout Indian Country." NIGC Chairwoman Stevens said.

NIGA hosted a Congressional Reception at the Longworth House Office Building on Tuesday evening. Attendees enjoyed an opportunity to meet with Congressional leaders and staffers.

The following evening the Tulalip Tribes of Washington hosted a reception in honor of newly appointed National Indian Gaming Commission Chairwoman, Tracie Stevens, who is member of the Tulalip tribe. Tulalip Tribal leadership and elders expressed many kind words of encouragement to NIGC Chairwoman Stevens.

Tribal Leaders are hopeful that the success of the 2010 Summer Legislative Summit will have a positive impact on the fall legislative calendar. "The National Indian Gaming Association and California Nations Indian Gaming Association legislative summits attract large gatherings of member tribes and associate members. This is imperative to supporting our mission which is to educate Congress, the news media and the general public about the positive impact of Indian gaming in all communities – Native and non-Native," explained Chairman Stevens. "Once again, Tribes have come to Washington, D.C., united in our desire to let our elected officials know that Indian Country has a strong voice on Capitol Hill. In addition, this is also a great opportunity to let our elected representatives know that Tribes will never rest as we strive to ensure that our sovereignty and the rights of Tribal governments are protected now and for future generations."

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About the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA)

The National Indian Gaming Association is a nonprofit trade association comprised of 184 American Indian Nations and other nonvoting associate member. 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 resources for tribes, policymakers and the public on Indian gaming issues and tribal community development. For more information, visit www.indiangaming.org.