

**STATEMENT OF
DANIEL K. AKAKA, CHAIRMAN**

**OVERSIGHT HEARING ON “ENFORCING THE INDIAN GAMING REGULATORY
ACT – THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION AND
TRIBES AS REGULATORS”**

July 28, 2011

Aloha and welcome to the Committee’s oversight hearing on “Enforcing the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act – The Role of the National Indian Gaming Commission and Tribes as Regulators.”

When the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act was passed by Congress in 1988, Indian gaming was a \$100 million dollar industry. Today, it is a \$26 billion dollar industry and there are 236 tribes -- operating 422 gaming facilities -- in 28 states. It is important that such a growth industry is well regulated for tribal governments, patrons, and the beneficiaries of gaming revenues – the tribal members.

Tribes, as the primary beneficiaries of Indian gaming, have the greatest interest in making sure their operations are well run. Tribal governments use these gaming revenues to fund essential government services such as education, health care, cultural programs, and tribal infrastructure. But the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act also created a role for states and the federal government – thereby setting up a three-tiered regulatory scheme for Indian gaming.

Today, there are approximately 2,800 regulators at the tribal level, 500 at the state level, and 100 at the National Indian Gaming Commission. Tribal governments spend approximately \$250 million dollars each year to fund their gaming commissions. The National Indian Gaming Commission is funded at \$16 million dollars annually.

At today’s hearing we will hear from Tracie Stevens, the Chair of the National Indian Gaming Commission. We are looking forward to learning about her first year in office, the Commission’s activities during the past year, and their plans going forward. We will also hear from regulators and tribal gaming organizations who are on the ground every day protecting the integrity of Indian gaming.

The Committee, like the NIGC and tribal regulators, takes its oversight role over Indian gaming very seriously. Indian gaming has proven to be the single-most effective economic development tool that tribes can participate in to provide critical programs and services for their tribal members.

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