

WASHINGTON STATE GAMBLING COMMISSION

SUMMARY

Mission: Protect the public by ensuring that gambling is legal and honest.

Foster full cooperation between tribes and the state based upon equality and a shared concern for the welfare of all the citizens of the state and tribes as a result of gaming.

Of the 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington state, 29 have compacts for Class III gaming and 21 of the tribes operate 27 casinos.

HIGHLIGHTS

Building on the consultation meeting approach we used in 2017, where we involved all tribes, rather than the tribe-by-tribe approach outlined in the compacts, the Chair of the Commission and staff had two meetings during the reporting period. We are currently working on several projects of mutual interest. First is an update to our agency's tribal relations policy. The policy is being re-written to align with our current processes and practices, and we are requesting input from tribes to improve the policy. Second, we are working with a group of tribal regulators, operators, and industry staff to improve the review process for electronic gambling equipment used only in tribal gaming facilities. Third, we are working with the Tribal Gaming Agency (TGA) directors, as directed by tribal leadership, on two other important processes: a) to review and improve the current regulatory billing structure outlined in the Class III gaming compacts and b) to coordinate tribal input on a possible statewide self-exclusion process proposed by the legislature. Although HB 2332/SB 6331 regarding self-exclusion did not pass, we expect it will be proposed again in upcoming sessions. The proposals coming from these two processes discussions will be presented to tribal leadership for final review and agreement. We will continue to have regular discussions and updates for tribal leaders on these and any other emerging topics.

We provided updates and participated in, or organized meetings and training for, licensing staff, TGA directors, gaming executives, equipment manufacturers, and independent testing laboratories.

In an effort to ensure that our electronic gambling lab does not duplicate testing already performed by the independent testing laboratories, we coordinated a visit to one of the major independent testing laboratories to observe testing performed and collaborate testing processes. We also conducted meetings with new Tribal Lottery System manufacturers to ensure the requirements of Class III Gaming Compact Appendix X2 are understood and submissions are not unduly delayed due to a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the requirements. These result-oriented approaches are working well. We have refined our process so that 15-day submissions are approved within an average of eight calendar days and 60-days submissions are approved within an average of forty calendar days.

In partnership with the Puyallup TGA, we conducted a weeklong new agent training course for 60 students from our agency and 13 tribes; the students were regulatory staff who will be

working at the tribal casinos. Topics included history, licensing, and regulation of Class III gaming in Washington state. In partnership with the Port Gamble S’Klallam TGA, we conducted a daylong licensing training attended by 34 representatives from 15 tribes, to answer tribe-specific questions and provide training about licensing, interviewing applicants, and criminal history reviews.

As part of our ongoing co-regulatory relationship with the tribes and to improve operational efficiency and the use of technology, we jointly agreed to 59 clarifications of compact appendices via Appendix A and X2 revisions and memorandums of understanding, and we concurred with 336 internal control and game rule submissions. We agreed to a second memorandum of understanding that allows a player’s ticket to be used in both the Class III Tribal Lottery System and Class II player terminals. The state gaming agency monitors Class III gaming while the TGA monitors Class III and Class II. This agreement allows the two agencies to work together across jurisdictions. We also jointly agreed to a new electronic table layout that improves integrity and regulatory control for roulette.

As a result of an amendment to the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe’s Class III gaming compact, staff coordinated with the Jamestown S’Klallam TGA to develop a registration process as well as a revised internal control review process. We altered our licensing system to support the registration process, which was new for Class III gaming employees. We created a format for the internal controls process based on compact requirements.

STAFF CONTACT

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