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WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today applauded President Obama's nomination of Tracie Stevens to be the chair of the National Indian Gaming Commission.

"Tracie Stevens is an outstanding choice as chair and will bring significant experience in both tribal government and gaming to the commission," Salazar said. "She will provide strong leadership to the commission as it deals with the many complex issues associated with Indian gaming."

As an independent federal regulatory agency of the United States, the National Indian Gaming Commission was established pursuant to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988. The commission comprises a chair and two commissioners, each of whom serves on a full-time basis for a three-year term. The chair is appointed by the President and must be confirmed by the Senate. The Secretary of the Interior appoints the other two commissioners.

Stevens, an enrolled member of the Tulalip Tribes in Washington State, currently serves as Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs, a position she has held since July, 2009.

Stevens brings with her almost 12 years of experience gained from working for her tribe in both government and business operations.

In her most recent position as senior policy analyst with her tribe's government affairs office, she managed day-to-day operations, including overseeing external public affairs and government relations functions, carried out advocacy and networking efforts, and served on state, regional and national Indian gaming-related boards and committees. She had served previously as a legislative policy analyst in the government affairs office working on tribal sovereignty, treaty rights and tribal governance issues.

Stevens began her professional career at her tribe's casino where she developed expertise in business management and administration. Her work in human resource management, employee recruitment and training, and operations planning and analysis eventually led her to becoming the Tulalip Casino's executive director for strategic planning.

Stevens received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Sciences from the University of Washington-Seattle in 2006.

The commission's primary mission is to regulate gaming activities on Indian lands for the purpose of shielding Indian tribes from organized crime and other corrupting influences; to ensure that Indian tribes are the primary beneficiaries of gaming revenue; and to assure that gaming is conducted fairly and honestly by both operators and players.

To achieve these goals, the commission is authorized to conduct investigations; undertake enforcement actions, including the issuance of notices of violation, assessment of civil fines, and/or issuance of closure orders; conduct background investigations; conduct audits; and review and approve tribal gaming ordinances. Under the act, at least two of the three commissioners must be enrolled members of

a federally recognized Indian tribe, and no more than two members may be of the same political party.