

# National Indian Health Board



## National Indian Health Board Resolution 22-06

### RESOLUTION ON CONTRACTING WITH EVENT VENUES THAT ALLOW FOR COMMERCIAL TOBACCO SMOKING IN COMMON AREAS

**WHEREAS**, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), established in 1972, serves all Federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Tribal governments by advocating for the improvement of health care delivery to AI/ANs, as well as upholding the Federal government’s trust responsibility to AI/AN Tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, traditional tobacco is a sacred component to many Indigenous ceremonies, while commercial tobacco serves no purpose other than bringing harm to the lungs, heart, skin, mouth, and other parts of the body, causing over 480,000 deaths a year in the United States<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, approximately 4 in 10 American Indians/Alaska Natives used commercial tobacco products in 2016<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, a growing health advocacy movement led by American Indian/Alaska Native community members, “Air is Life,” has called for Tribal governments to ban commercial tobacco product use in communal spaces and in Tribally owned or operated facilities, seeing success with the Navajo Nation’s enactment of the “Air is Life Act of 2021<sup>3</sup>”; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the temporary closure of gaming facilities, hotels, conference centers, and other commercial buildings in Indian Country; and

**WHEREAS**, Tribes in 25 states used the temporary closure of these facilities to renovate common spaces, removing residue from consistent exposure to second and third hand tobacco smoke, and to make at least 157 of these facilities smokefree upon reopening<sup>4</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2019 the National Indian Health Board adopted a resolution forbidding the organization from soliciting or accepting commercial tobacco and electronic smoking device funding, sponsorships, or partnerships; and

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<sup>1</sup> “Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/health\\_effects/effects\\_cig\\_smoking/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> “American Indians/Alaska Natives and Tobacco Use.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/american-indians/index.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Air is Life Act of 2021 passed by Navajo Nation Council, Praised by Health Advocates.” Navajo Nation Council [https://www.navajonationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Air\\_is\\_Life\\_2021.10.19.pdf](https://www.navajonationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Air_is_Life_2021.10.19.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> “Smokefree Casino & Gaming Property Directory.” ANR Foundation.  
<https://www.gamingdirectory.com/smokefree/properties/>

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the National Indian Health Board will not solicit nor enter into event contracts from venues or facilities that allow for indoor commercial tobacco smoking in common areas; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the National Indian Health Board calls for the federal government, to provide funding for Tribal nations to convert Tribally owned or operated facilities to smoke free status.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board, with quorum present, on the 24th day of February, 2022.



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William Smith  
NIHB Chairperson

**ATTEST:**



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Lisa Elgin  
NIHB Secretary