

Attorney General Jon Bruning recently announced a multi-state agreement with four major tobacco companies that settles a 10-year dispute regarding payments under the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement (MSA). The agreement will provide Nebraska approximately \$18 million in 2013 and ensures continued payments in the future.

In 1998, the major tobacco companies agreed to pay states more than \$200 billion over 25 years to settle lawsuits over the health care costs related to smoking. For the past 10 years, there has been a dispute between the tobacco companies and the states over portions of the payments.

Since 2003, Nebraska has received approximately \$300 million from the four largest tobacco companies. Annually, approximately \$40 million in payments would be at risk by continued arbitration.

On Dec. 17, the settlement was agreed upon by 17 states including Nebraska, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming. The states were joined by the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.