



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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NEWS RELEASE

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NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE APPROVES EXPANDED TRIBAL POLICE JURISDICTION

Police Powers Extended to Hogansburg Triangle

AKWESASNE, NY—The New York State Legislature has passed bills that grant expanded jurisdiction to the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Department. The State Assembly and State Senate overwhelmingly voted in favor of legislation that extends the tribal police jurisdiction to an area known as the “Hogansburg (Bombay) Triangle.”

New York State Assemblywoman Janet Duprey (R,I-Peru) sponsored the Assembly version of the Bill (A07256) where it passed by a vote of 148-0 on June 9, 2015. The Senate’s version of the bill (S04869) was sponsored by State Senator Betty Little (R-Queensbury) and passed on June 15, 2015, with 62 out of 63 State Senators voting in favor.

“This is good news for the Tribal Police that enhances their law enforcement capabilities for the safety of our community members and travelers,” stated Tribal Chief Ron LaFrance. “The bill recognizes the need to extend their powers certified by the Superintendent of State Police to an area we have always considered part of Akwesasne.”

Prior to the bill; court cases involving DWI’s, drug-related arrests and other criminal offenses have been dismissed due to a jurisdictional dilemma. Indian Law S114 limits tribal police authority to the state-recognized boundary of the reservation that the State contends does not include the Hogansburg Triangle. This has posed a direct threat to the community’s safety as a portion of Akwesasne’s main travel route, State Route 37, passes directly through the triangle-shaped area, which State Troopers have not traditionally patrolled.

The Tribe considers the boundary for the southern portion of the Akwesasne community to be historically intact as a rectangular shape. As a result, the bill now extends the Tribal Police Department’s authority to include *Tekahson’karó:rens* (Hogansburg) and makes their jurisdiction of the community’s southern portion as one complete area.

“Our people will be safer through this ‘stop-gap’ measure that addresses our community’s vulnerability concerns and sovereign interests,” noted Tribal Chief Paul Thompson. “It respects tribal sovereignty through a unique arrangement between the Tribal Police Department and the State Police that recognizes the need to have Mohawk police officers patrol our territory.”

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The expansion of the Tribal Police's authority into the Hogansburg Triangle is effective until September 1, 2017. At that time, the State Legislature can renew the legislation to extend the police department's jurisdiction based on beneficial results. The Tribe is also finalizing negotiations with Franklin County and New York State to resolve a land claim that will recognize the area as reservation land.

"The Tribe appreciates the support that the legislation received from the New York State Legislature," added Tribal Chief Beverly Cook. "We particularly want to thank Assemblywoman Janet Duprey and Senator Betty Little for sponsoring a bill that enhances the safety of local residents and travelers in the Akwesasne community."

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The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the Saint Regis Mohawk People.