



# Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SRMT POLICE RECOGNIZED AS THE AUTHORITY IN THE HOGANSBURG TRIANGLE**

*Certificate of Expanded Jurisdiction Signed By Governor Cuomo*

**AKWESASNE, NY**— Stemming from legislation passed by NYS Senate and Assembly in June 2015, legislation has been officially signed into law allowing the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Police to exercise police authority to the area known as the “Hogansburg Triangle.” Superintendent of the New York State Police Joseph A. D’Amico endorsed the Superintendent’s Certificate of Expanded Jurisdiction on August 13, 2015.

In June, the State Assembly and State Senate overwhelming voted in favor of their respective versions of the bill that extends the jurisdiction. Prior to the enactment of this law, pursuant to Indian Law S114, State courts had concluded that the Tribal police did not have authority to the area because police authority delegated to the tribal police to enforce state law did not extend to the Triangle, an area that is part of ongoing land claim negotiation and always considered part of the reservation by the Mohawks. This has resulted in court cases involving DWI’s, drug-related arrests and other criminal offenses being dismissed. “The safety of our community and our police officers has been the driving force behind our collective efforts to see this bill through,” stated Chief Eric Thompson. “The law provides clarity to law enforcement, resolves jurisdictional ambiguity and respects tribal sovereignty.”

SRMT Police Commission Chairperson Rowena General shared, "The overwhelming support of Bill #07256 by the Assembly and Senate [210 - 1] and NYS Governor Cuomo provides our Police Department with the support and recognition that allows them to continue to exercise their authority and obligation to preserve the safety and well-being of everyone within the Territory of Akwesasne. On behalf of the Police Commission, I thank Tribal Council for upholding a strong position on this issue."

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Chief of Police, Matthew Rourke remarked, “This is an historic day for our Police Department and the community of Akwesasne. We need to have Mohawk police officers patrolling our territory and we’ve always considered this area part of Akwesasne. On behalf of the SRMT Police Department, we extend our appreciation to Governor Cuomo, the State Police Superintendent Joseph D’Amico, the New York State Legislature, NYS Assemblywoman Janet Duprey, NYS Senator Betty Little, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council, former SRMT General Counsel Michele Mitchell, our State Lobbyist, Giorgio DeRosa from Bolton St. Johns, General Counsel Danielle Lazore-Thompson, NYS Police Major Charles Guess, the Franklin County District Attorney’s Office and the community of Akwesasne.”

Negotiations concerning the Mohawk land claim continue between the Tribe, Franklin County and New York State. Resolution of the land claim would bring finality to the boundary of Akwesasne. “The Tribe appreciates the support of our neighbors and the New York State Legislature for sponsorship of a bill that enhances the public safety of our communities, our visitors and our law enforcement officers,” commented Chief Beverly Cook.

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