



# St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Mohawk Tribe Formally Notifies State of New York** *Specifies State Violation of Gaming Compact*

**Akwesasne Territory.** The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, in a letter dated October 12, 2010, provided notification to the State of New York that the State has violated provisions of the Tribal State Compact. In response to this notification, Counsel to Governor Paterson responded to the tribe that they were unaware of any such violation, and required specific information from the Tribe. This week the Tribe responded with additional information regarding the violation. According to the Tribe, the State has allowed the installation and operation of slot machines at the Ganienkeh Territorial Bingo.

Specifically, the compact guarantees the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe the exclusive right to operate slot machines in an eight county area in exchange for revenue sharing payments to the State. Those payments are then distributed, according to State law, to the State, and Franklin and St. Lawrence counties.

The Tribe asserts that New York State officials have been fully aware of the gaming activities at Ganienkeh since prior to the adoption of the Compact Amendment in 2004 and, despite this knowledge, continued to accept revenue sharing payments from the Tribe in violation of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

The operation of the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino has never had negative financial impacts on New York State or its surrounding counties. To the contrary, recent studies have shown that the Tribe's gaming operation has generated millions of dollars in state income and plays a significant role in the region's economy. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe is the third largest private employer across St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties.

Should the State disagree with the Tribe's assertion that the exclusivity provision of the Compact has been violated, the proper course of action is to arbitrate the disagreement. If the arbitrator finds that the State has breached exclusivity by allowing the operation at Ganienkeh, the Tribe would be under no obligation to continue making payments to the State, and the Tribe would seek reimbursement of payments made, during the time that the State allowed the breach.

Contrary to statements made recently by representatives of New York State, the Tribal-State Compact has no provision that allows New York State to declare the compact invalid and request the closure of the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino.

Also contrary to statements made more recently by representatives of the Governor's office, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe may, at its discretion, provide gaming revenues to local governments. Such payments are not "illegal," as described in the State's most recent statements. In fact, both of the Tribe's gaming operations have and will continue to contribute gaming revenues to charities, hospitals and other local organizations. According to Tribal Chief, Mark Garrow, "We recognize our responsibility, as a major employer of the North Country, to continue to contribute to the overall economic prosperity of our neighbors and friends in Franklin and St. Lawrence counties."

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