



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

Chief Randy Hart
Chief Ron LaFrance Jr.
Chief Paul O. Thompson
Sub-Chief Shelley Jacobs
Sub-Chief Michael L. Connors
Sub-Chief Eric Thompson

PRESS RELEASE

For release:
Ohiarihkó:wa / July 5, 2012

For more information:
David T. Staddon, Director Public Information
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe
Tel: (518) 358-2272 ext. 286

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Dissatisfied with State's Disregard for Court Ruling *State Refuses to Return Cigarettes, Despite Court Order*

Akwesasne Territory. On June 18, 2012, New York State Supreme Court Judge David Demarest ruled that the State of New York had no right to confiscate cigarettes manufactured in Akwesasne and bound for the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. "Judge Demarest's ruling affirms the sovereign right of tribes to engage in intertribal trade," remarked Randy Hart, Tribal Chief. "And the manufacturer is federally licensed to manufacture tobacco products."

Judge Demarest ruled that no taxes were due. Since neither the state nor the county filed for criminal or civil action, the state was obligated to return the cigarettes. "New York does not have the right to tax cigarettes manufactured in North Carolina if they are transported through New York on their way to another state, like Ohio, for example," said Tribal Chief Ron LaFrance. "We are entitled to the same rights."

U.S. Border Patrol agents confiscated the cigarettes and turned them over to the New York State Police where they continue to sit in a state warehouse. "It's clear that the state wants to restrict or eliminate an important part of our economies," said Tribal Chief Paul Thompson. "We need to sit down with Governor Cuomo and have some discussions on how we can resolve this issue."

"This is another example of the state not listening to the court," said Chief Hart. "The court was clear in its decision that the cigarettes should not have been taken in the first place and that they should be returned. This is an important part of our economy. The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe continues to support small businesses, the tribal economy in addition to local and regional economies."

#

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

Helping Build A Better Tomorrow

412 State Route 37
Akwesasne, New York 13655
Phone: 518-358-2272