



# St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

Chief Ron LaFrance Jr.  
Chief Paul O. Thompson  
Chief Beverly Cook  
Sub-Chief Michael L. Conners  
Sub-Chief Eric Thompson  
Sub-Chief Shelley Jacobs

## NEWS RELEASE

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For more information:  
Communications Department,  
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe  
Tel: (518) 358-2272

### **Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Represented at Tribal Nations Conference 2013** *Chief Beverly Cook Invited to the White House*

**Akwesasne** – The White House hosted Tribal Leaders at the 2013 White House Tribal Nations Conference in Washington, DC on November 13, 2013. Chief Beverly Cook represented the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe at an event leading to President Obama committing to visit Indian Country next year. The President recognized the “unique legal and political relationship, one that’s been affirmed many times in treaties, in statutes and in the Constitution”. In the President’s opening statement, he acknowledged members of the Iroquois Nation remarking, “We could learn from the Iroquois Confederacy, just as our Founding Fathers did when they laid the groundwork for our democracy.”

Chief Beverly Cook shared her sentiments, “It was a powerful sight to see so many Tribal Nations and governments represented at the Conference. Their concerns reflected the challenges we all face dealing with the complexities of our community relationships and responsibilities. Providing for the needs of our people in terms of health, safety of our women and children, environmental justice and economic development were only a few of the issues at the top of everyone’s list for discussion and happily they were echoed by the President in his address.”

President Obama spoke on the importance of strengthening justice and tribal sovereignty and the importance of working “to resolve longstanding disputes” over Indian lands. He highlighted a milestone in the passage of The Violence Against Women Act, allowing prosecution of those who commit domestic violence in Indian Country, regardless of Native status. He affirmed his support of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act to create greater access to affordable housing. Environmental and renewable energy issues were addressed by Obama, “We want to develop the energy potential of tribal lands in a responsible way and in accordance with tribal wishes”.

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Sub-Chief Michael Connors commented, “I was proud to represent Akwesasne in Washington. We attended five political fundraisers for Senators and Congressmen. During each of these, we were able to brief National leaders on issues in Akwesasne such as border crossing and immigration, land claims issues, General Motors site clean-up and using Tribal enrollment/residency data as a replacement for census based funding. Out of 566 federally recognized tribes, we were one of a small number present at each of these events giving us dedicated face-time with each of these national leaders. The small audience was of tremendous benefit to us. We were able to educate the national leaders on issues that directly impact our tribe. It was a highly productive week as we established relationships and built momentum.

The President’s closing statements touched on the importance of “standing up for justice and tribal sovereignty; increasing economic opportunity; expanding quality health care; protecting native homelands”. Sub-Chief Eric Thompson reinforced the “relevance of our leadership continuing on the path of establishing our tribal imprint on national affairs by ensuring we have a seat at the table.”

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



Photo: Sub-Chief Michael Connors, Chief Beverly Cook and Sub-Chief Eric Thompson in front of the U. S. Capitol Building.