



Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

Chief Barbara A. Lazore
Chief James W. Ransom
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PRESS RELEASE

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ST. REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE URGES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR TO REVISIT KEMPTHORNE POLICY

Off-Reservation Gaming at Stake

AKWESASNE TERRITORY – The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council, at this past Saturday’s Tribal meeting, released a letter it sent to the Department of the Interior requesting the withdrawal of the January 3, 2008 policy on Gaming Related Fee-to-Trust Applications. The policy was the basis for Interior’s denial of the Tribe’s trust application for its 29.31 acre site in the Catskills which led to the breakup of the agreement between Empire Resorts and the Tribe for the Monticello Raceway Site.

“We made it clear last year that we would patiently wait for a new administration to arrive in Washington and one that would hopefully revisit the injustices that were done to our Tribe,” said Tribal Chief James W. Ransom. “That time has come.”

Tribal officials view former Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne’s decision restricting the placement of off-reservation land into trust as an administrative breach of good faith in the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the federal government. When an opportunity arose to provide input to the new administration, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe responded.

As a result, Tribal officials recently traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with Laura Daniel Davis, Associate Deputy Secretary of the Interior and presented her with the letter requesting that Kempthorne’s policy be rescinded.

“At this stage, everything is preliminary,” declared Tribal Chief Barbara Lazore. “But we felt it was important to tell our history of the past 14 years, which was dismissed at the stroke of a pen by the previous administration.”

At the monthly tribal meeting held on Saturday, April 4th, Tribal officials announced that they had also met with representatives from Empire Resorts. Both Empire and the Tribal Council agreed to continue discussions about their former project. Council made it clear to Empire Resorts that any agreements would need approval by the

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community through a referendum and that the community must be part of the decision-making process. The release of the letter at the Tribal meeting was essential to Council's effort to include the community as it explores its options relating to its former Catskill casino project.

"We are still in the very early stages of reviewing our options and don't want to raise any false hopes, either for the tribe or for Sullivan County," remarked Tribal Chief James Ransom. "But we would be remiss not to take a look at our options for such a project."

"We all know the potential benefits of a tribally-operated casino in this geographic location because it will provide employment for tribal members and boost the economy of Sullivan County," added Tribal Chief Lazore. "This development could allow us to continue on the path to economic self-sufficiency and could very well be the stimulus package for both communities."

The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe would most likely be first in line for a Catskill casino development since it has the most complete application in terms of state and federal approvals.

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