



Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

Chief Barbara A. Lazore
Chief James W. Ransom
Chief Monica M. Jacobs
Sub-Chief Stacy A. Adams
Sub-Chief Ronald LaFrance Jr.

PRESS RELEASE

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STATE TAX LEGISLATION WILL HURT NORTHERN NEW YORK ECONOMY

Tribe supports Governor's Call for Negotiated Solution and Asks for Meeting

Akwesasne Territory. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council responded today to recent legislation passed by the New York State Legislature (S08146) that attempts to criminalize sales of cigarettes and tobacco products on Indian reservations.

"This bill, like similar legislation proposed before it, will harm the northern New York economy, not help it," said Tribal Chief James W. Ransom. "The economic impact could be greater than \$2 million per year."

Chief Ransom was referring to results of a study (commissioned by the Mohawk Anti-Tax Steering Committee at the urging of the Tribe) in October 2003 that evaluated the economic impacts of an increase in gasoline and tobacco sales tax on the Mohawk territory. The study was performed by Regional Economic Models Incorporated (REMI). REMI's Policy Insight model that was used for the study is the leading regional economic forecasting and policy analysis model.

"We already collect fees from Tribal businesses that would be harmed by this legislation and that will hurt our ability to deliver essential governmental services," said Tribal Chief Barbara A. Lazore. "It will also result in a loss of jobs that no one in the state is even considering."

Chief Lazore was referring to the \$4 million in annual business fees that the Tribe collects and uses to fund programs such as law enforcement, health, education, and senior services. She was also referring to the hundreds of jobs being held by non-Native that will be lost if this legislation is successful in going forward.

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Helping Build A Better Tomorrow

“We commend the Governor for taking the position he would like to meet with the Indian Nation leadership in the state to discuss this issue,” said Tribal Chief Monica M. Jacobs. “The Tribe has always been open to having such a dialogue.”

The Tribal Council sent a letter to Governor Patterson on Friday conveying its appreciation for the position he has put forth. In the August 22, 2008 letter the Tribal Chiefs commend the Governor “...for taking the initiative to open a dialogue with Tribes/Nations. We believe that building a positive relationship is the key to resolving many of the differences between the State and us.” In that letter, the Tribal Council also requested a meeting with the Governor so that they could have an open and frank discussion in regards to the State tax concerns.

“It is only by building a positive relationship that state tax concerns can be mutually addressed. We look forward to the opportunity to do that with Governor Patterson,” concluded Chief Ransom.

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