



Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

483 Great Neck Rd. South, Mashpee, MA 02649

Phone (508) 477-0208 Fax (508) 477-1218

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Contact: Paula Gates, Regan Communications
617-488-2853 (w) 617-869-4052 (c)
pgates@regancomm.com

Mashpee Wampanoag Secure House Approval For *Project First Light* Compact

Tribal-State Compact Moves Onto the State Senate

(Mashpee, MA – October 9, 2013) – The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe’s *Project First Light* destination resort casino has reached another key milestone today. On a vote of 116 to 38, the Massachusetts House approved the revised gaming compact between the Tribe and Governor Deval Patrick. It now moves on to the state Senate for a vote.

“We thank the members of the House for supporting this revised compact, which brings us another step closer to breaking ground on *Project First Light*,” said Cedric Cromwell, chairman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. “We believe this agreement keeps our world-class destination resort casino on track, ultimately providing thousands of jobs for southeastern Massachusetts and billions in new revenue for the Commonwealth.”

Under the revised Compact, the Commonwealth will receive at least \$2.1 billion in revenue over 20 years. The agreement also provides over \$300 million specifically to the southeastern Massachusetts region for transportation, education, tourism and funding for surrounding communities.

Approval of the Compact for a tribal casino in Taunton is consistent with the provisions of the state’s Expanded Gaming Act of 2011.

The *Project First Light* destination resort casino is expected to create 1,000 construction jobs, more than 2,650 permanent jobs, and an \$80 million annual payroll. The \$500 million project will include a 150,000-square-foot casino; hotels with 300 rooms apiece; 3,000 slot machines, 150 tables and 40 poker tables; and an events center.

With a host agreement already in place, voter approval by the citizens of Taunton and environmental reports already completed and filed with state and federal agencies, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe is far along in the casino development process.

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“I am pleased that the General Court has decided to move forward with the compact between the Commonwealth and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. Project First Light will provide much needed employment opportunities to the people of Taunton, as well as the residents of Southeastern Massachusetts,” said Taunton Mayor Thomas Hoyer. “This compact is essentially a job creation bill, which will help our region's struggling families gain sustainability in this difficult economy. I am hopeful that the Legislature will approve the compact, as the Tribe continues their quest to have their Land in Trust application approved at the Federal Level.”

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, also known as the “People of the First Light,” will pay 17 percent of gaming revenue from its proposed casino, provided there is no competition from another casino in Southeastern Massachusetts. The compact is now cleared to go before the state Senate. Once approved by the state, the compact will then move on to the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs for final approval.

“Today’s vote on the Tribal/State Compact is a significant vote of support for Project First Light. I applaud House members for their leadership in advancing this Compact. This is a major advancement in protecting tribal sovereignty while at the same time protecting the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,” said Chairman Cromwell.

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe’s *Project First Light* destination resort casino will generate economic benefits for the residents of southeastern Massachusetts, the Commonwealth and members of the Tribe. “The state and region will benefit from casino revenues, while at the same time, the Tribe envisions the casino operation will contribute to tribal sovereignty by providing economic leverage for Tribal self-determination. *Project First Light* will deliver the financial resources for us to provide Tribal members with the best in education, jobs, housing, health care, and other services they need and deserve,” Chairman Cromwell stated. “As I have said before, and emphasize again - we live here, we work here, we want to grow here and we will reinvest here. We are the hometown team.”

A federally-recognized Indian tribe that has historically resided in southeastern Massachusetts, the Mashpee Wampanoag are proposing to build on lands taken into trust by the federal Department of the Interior at the interchange of Routes 24 and 140. A land-in-trust application from the tribe is currently under review by the federal Department of Interior.

The tribe has already submitted a Draft Environmental Impact Report for Project First Light, keeping the tribe’s resort destination casino project on pace to start construction next year.

About the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe:

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, known as the People of the First Light, has inhabited present-day Massachusetts for more than 12,000 years. After an arduous process lasting more than three decades, the Mashpee Wampanoag were re-acknowledged as a federally recognized tribe in 2007 and retain full tribal sovereignty rights. The Mashpee tribe currently has approximately 2,600 enrolled citizens.