



Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

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Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Announces Signing of Tribal/State Compact This Morning At The State House

Governor Deval Patrick Presides Over Ceremony

(Mashpee, MA – Nov. 15, 2013) – Today the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe celebrate the signing of the revised Tribal/State Compact, a significant step forward along the road to building a destination resort casino in Taunton. At the State House this morning, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Chairman Cedric Cromwell, Vice Chairwoman Jessie “Little Doe” Baird, Chief Vernon “Silent Drum” Lopez, and members of the Tribal Council joined Governor Deval Patrick in a signing ceremony to affirm the Tribe’s partnership with the Commonwealth to establish a Tribal casino in Region C. The state House and Senate enacted the Compact earlier this week.

The Compact now moves on to Washington, DC, where it will be submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), a critical step in the Land-Into-Trust process. The BIA has 45 days from receipt of the Compact to accept or reject it.

“This is an important and meaningful milestone for our **Project First Light** destination resort casino,” said Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Chairman Cedric Cromwell. “We have been working steadily and with due diligence to ensure that this development project will deliver economic stimulus to the city of Taunton and the region, as well as to the Commonwealth and the Tribal community.”

“I am pleased that the Legislature approved - and that the Governor has signed - 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. This Compact is essentially a job creation bill, which will help our region's struggling families gain sustainability in this difficult economy,” said Taunton Mayor Thomas Hoye. “I am hopeful that the Bureau of Indian Affairs will approve the compact, as the Tribe continues their quest to have their Land in Trust application approved at the Federal Level.”

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Under the revised Compact, the Commonwealth will receive at least \$2.1 billion in revenue over 20 years. These funds will be used for education, tourism, transportation and economic development. The agreement also provides over \$300 million specifically to the southeastern Massachusetts, including funding for transportation project and assistance to surrounding communities.

Approval of the Compact for a tribal casino in Taunton is necessary for the Commonwealth to receive funding from a tribal casino. The approval is another important milestone for the tribe and is consistent with the provisions of the state's Expanded Gaming Act of 2011.

Last June, Taunton voters overwhelmingly voted to approve the Tribe's *Project First Light* casino. A host agreement with Taunton is already in place, and draft environmental reports are completed and filed with state and federal agencies. Recently, the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs approved a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the tribe's land in trust application. This is a critical step in the overall process of land acquisition for the tribe.

"I applaud the Governor, Senate President Murray, Speaker DeLeo, and members of the Legislature for their continued support," said Chairman Cromwell.

The Mashpee Wampanoag tribe is a federally-recognized Indian tribe that has historically resided in southeastern Massachusetts, the tribe is proposing to build on lands taken into trust by the federal Department of the Interior at the interchange of Routes 24 and 140. The project 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.

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.

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