



For Immediate release: April 15, 2013

Contact: Brooke Scannell 617.922.0094 or Stephanie Sfiridis 508.317.3364

## **Cromwell: We Will Build in Taunton Regardless of Threats** ***Lawsuits won't stop Tribe's plans to build a destination resort casino in Taunton***

Mashpee, MA – Chairman Cedric Cromwell today announced that the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe will proceed with its planned destination resort casino in Taunton despite threats from would-be commercial developers and opponents of Native American rights to tie the Tribe up in litigation for years.

“Threats to sue our Tribe, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Department of the Interior will not deter us from building a first class destination resort casino in Taunton,” Cromwell said. “We have known all along that different groups would sue to try and deprive us of our tribal rights, but it has become clear that our opponents are more concerned with their own self-interest than the good of Southeastern Massachusetts. All they are doing is lining the pockets of lawyers instead of working to fill the pockets of the good people of Southeastern Massachusetts who need work.”

“As soon as our land is placed in trust, we are prepared to break ground and provide good jobs to thousands of local people,” Cromwell said.

The US Department of the Interior is no longer delaying placing land in trust once they have reached a final record of decision. Previously, the Department had an internal “self-stay” policy under which they waited 30 days to see if lawsuits were filed before placing land in trust.

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, which is landless, has an application for land in trust under active review at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Earlier this year, the BIA announced that the Tribe’s lands in Taunton and Mashpee will qualify as an initial reservation, an important status in federal law that will allow the Tribe to conduct gaming. The Tribe expects that the required environmental review and hearings will be complete later this year, and that the final Record of Decision will follow shortly thereafter.

Chairman Cromwell added, “We also will not be deterred by any action of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. While we continue to wonder why they are ignoring the intent of Governor Patrick and the Legislature, whatever decision they make regarding opening Region C to commercial bid will not stop us from moving forward. It does, however, risk having two casinos in Southeastern Massachusetts and four in the state. In this case, our Tribe will pay no revenue to the state, and according to the state’s own research, will destroy the economic model on which the state based its Expanded Gaming Law. This will cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars.”

**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 30+ year process, the Mashpee Wampanoag were re-acknowledged as a federally recognized tribe in 2007 and retain full tribal sovereignty rights. There are approximately 2,600 enrolled citizens of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

##