

GOVERNOR'S ACTION THREATEN SOVEREINTY:

State ~ Tribal Accord Participation Questioned



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*Representing All Members
Everywhere*

Ahneen, BooZo, Negee:

Under the Engler Administration (a republican one), Michigan tribes entered a Tribal-State Accord to reinforce a government to government relationship among sovereigns. After all, the origin for state sovereignty is the same as it is for Tribe under the *U.S. Constitution, Article One, Section 8, paragraph 3*. The purpose of the Accord was to open lines of communication and dialog. For the most part, this effort has succeeded under Governor Engler, then reinforced under Governor Granholm (democratic administration). When Governor Snyder took office, announced he would respect this precedent and continue these annual meetings and through key Michigan staff. While meetings with key staff have been helpful, the meetings with the Governor no longer appear to have any value other than presenting gifts and a photo op.

The government to government relationship in the last few years has denigrated through the Governor's lack of leadership and duty to hold consultation sessions to gather input on our tribal position on matters. This is very difficulty for me to say as I have spent the last 22 years advocating a government to government relationship by training future Michigan legislators through the Michigan Political Leadership program. Currently, 16 of our alumni (both democrat and republican and all individuals who I trained on Tribal government and relations with tribes) serve as Michigan legislators.

In this report, I list several examples where the Snyder administration appears to feel they hold dominion over tribes as minority groups or

mere 'special interests.' At this point, I see no value for continuing to be a part of the Tribal-State Accord as it appears to just be window dressing with no substantive value. What I do not know is whether or not the Governor is simply aloof and has little substantive concern about our position on key matters, or if he resents us as a special interest. Either way, I do not feel as though our Tribe is benefitting from continue involvement. I would, however, like to hear your opinions.

FAILED COMPACT NEGOTIATIONS

In 1993, our Tribe - and six others - entered a twenty year compact that articulated how gaming would occur in Michigan. Mostly, the State offered what is called "exclusivity" by not allowing other forms of gaming in the State. In consideration, tribes provided 8% of our gaming revenues to the Michigan Strategic Fund (now the Michigan Economic Development Corporation) which was essentially a Governor's slush fund to garner votes for reelection. Most of the money generated from casinos though this arrangement did not make its way back to our surrounding communities other than the 2% tribes paid to local government.

This provision was violated in 1998, when the State enacted State licensed gaming (ie. Detroit). I estimated that nearly a billion dollars was paid to the State before this change. It is important to note that this arrangement did not and does not allow the State to regulate our gaming in any way as this would violate our sovereignty and the federal government - namely the National Indian Gaming Commission - will not allow this.

In December of 2012, I received a certified letter from Governor Rick Snyder to invoke a clause to negotiate a new compact. It is important to note that as long as we participate by negotiating in good faith, our gaming compact continues. The State threatened this was not the case but has since d acknowledged it continues. Nearly four months after invoking the clause to renegotiate, the Governor's office submitted a draft agreement which would have us consent to having the State regulate our gaming,

and assign a \$225,000 fee for the right to be regulated! This is insulting. They also wanted up to 10% of our gaming revenues to go to the State. What did they offer in return? **NOTHING!** If you are wondering if this kind of offer is in good faith, then you are not alone. I have asked folks at the Bureau of Indian Affairs if this is "good faith" and they have said clear, "no".

Since this time, other tribal leaders and I have asked, "what are your offering?", "with clean audits for twenty years, what suggests you need to regulate us", "why do you feel we should pay to be regulated"? Each of these questions have fallen on deaf ears. A whole year and a half has been waste while the Governor tries to figure out how to get us to give something for nothing in return.

OTHER EXAMPLES

The compact negotiations are just one example of a lack of respect for us as a government. Here are a few others:

GRAYMONT MINING

This proposed 12,000 acre loss of land would have interests outside of Michigan come in, virtually strip mine land in Rexton, MI which is situated in our treaty ceded territory, and possibly damage our ability to exercise our treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather. As a Tribe, we demanded consultation - which clearly was not planned despite our government-to-

government expectation in the Tribal-State accord. Even after the State relented and appeased us by listening, it appears to have had no effect.

WOLF HUNT

The wolf is sacred to us as *Anishinabe* as part of our creation story. Additionally, as natural conservationists, and as an 1836 Treaty tribe with retained rights to hunt, gather and fish, I am concerned about the precedence this new hunt to kill wolves represents. No science was used to justify this practice. If the State can unilaterally make decisions over what the Inland Consent decree would otherwise consider our retain rights, then there is truly no consultation, no consideration and no rights! All of the Michigan tribes, one by one, have expressed opposition to the wolf hunt directly to the Governor's during a Tribal-State Accord but the State is moving forward regardless of what we think. While we requested consultation, the State argues that public sessions met this burden as if we are a some sort of special interest. One such session was scheduled when Tribal leaders were busy meeting with President Obama in Washington, DC!

MI CITIZENS' RIGHTS?!!

Finally, in order to assert our right as a Tribal Nation and as Michigan Citizens, we joined two efforts to gather petition signatures to force a Statewide referendum. We

are confident the voters would put an end to the unjustified trophy of wolves for sport. The Michigan legislature (controlled by republicans in the House, Senate and Governor levels) passed a law to circumvent our right to petition. I advised the Governor that while he may feel it acceptable to ignore MI Indians on this issue, it is probably not wise to ignore over 500,000 voters who signed the petitions.

MUNISING WALKING TRACK OPENS

At the time I write this, I would like to announce that we have finally opened our walking track at the Munising Tribal Health Center. The walking track is on the third floor of the Tribal center and is made possible through a cooperative effort with the City of Munising and our Clinic. I would like to thank Vic Matson, Sr., Shirley Petoskey, Joanie Carr-Anderson and Rita Glyptis as Unit 5 Board Members who supported this project, the rest of the Tribal Board, Marlene Glaesman, the current Munising City Manager and my long time good friend, Doug Bovin, retired Munising City Manager. During the opening, we did a one mile walk to celebrate and held an open house. Thank you and Happy fitness to Munising Sault Tribe members and residents!

Chi McGwitch, Negee!

WELCOME DR. AND TERESA PLEGER TO LSSU & THE SOO



This spring, the university where our Tribal Headquarters is located, Lake Superior State University, hired their new President ~ Dr. Thomas Pleger. I was honored to serve on the search committee to hire the new president. Dr. Pleger is from Marinette Wisconsin and holds a doctorate in Anthropology/ Archaeology from the University of Wisconsin. Most recently, he served as President of the University of Wisconsin at Baraboo. His wife Teresa has worked in college student life positions and has a strong student-centered orientation. I am currently in discussions with LSSU faculty to forge a closer relationship between LSSU's wildlife biology program and our stand-out Inland Wildlife Department which aids in administering our Inland Treaty rights. We are also looking at additional academic outreach to our Tribal Members. Over 1,500 of our Members from all five election Units and outside of the service area are alumni of LSSU so this is a great fit.

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