



## SCHAGHTICOKE TRIBAL NATION CONNECTICUT

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 7, 2016**

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### **Schaghticoke Tribal Nation Challenges CT Casino Bill as Unconstitutional** *Files Lawsuit against the State Of Connecticut;* *Joins Forces with MGM to Ensure Open, Transparent & Competitive Bidding Process*

Kent, Connecticut – Today the Chief of the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation (“STN”), Richard L. Velky, announced that STN has filed a lawsuit against the State of Connecticut, asking the court to declare Special Act 15-7 unconstitutional. Special Act 15-7 grants the right to pursue Connecticut’s first ever commercial casino, on non-tribal land, exclusively to two Native American tribes – the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and the Mohegan Tribe of Indians. The Act is unconstitutional because, among other reasons, it violates the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article First § 20 of the Connecticut Constitution.

Chief Velky explained: “Without any competitive bidding or gaming study, Connecticut shut out the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation and awarded to one pair of Native American tribes the exclusive ability to develop a highly-valuable commercial enterprise. Under the Equal Protection clauses of the federal and state Constitutions, the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation should have the same right to pursue this economic opportunity as anyone else.”

Unlike the tribal casinos on the Mashantucket Pequot and the Mohegan Tribe’s reservations, which are governed by federal laws concerning tribal gaming, the exclusive casino-development project authorized by Special Act 15-7 would be Connecticut’s first commercial casino, on non-tribal lands.

On January 29, 2016, STN filed with the Secretary of the State’s Office its articles of organization for its newly-formed entity, Confluence of Rivers Tribal Business Entity LLC, to pursue the economic rights created under the Special Act. The Secretary of the State’s Office rejected that application, stating, in a February 10, 2016 letter, that STN is “ineligib[le]” to register a tribal business entity under the Act and thus unable “to receive a grant of legal authority under Special Act 15-7.”



“The State has a long history of discriminating against the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation,” Chief Velky said. “Recently, the State fought our federal recognition, supposedly because they didn’t want another casino in Connecticut. Now Connecticut wants to open a new casino, but only if the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation doesn’t get an opportunity to submit a proposal to operate it. The Schaghticoke Tribal Nation seeks equal treatment, which does not exist under Special Act 15-7.”

Chief Velky also announced that STN has joined forces with MGM, to pursue both parties’ mutual interests in fighting the Act. MGM Resorts International Global Gaming Development has already brought a lawsuit against Connecticut, claiming Special Act 15-7 is unconstitutional. Both suits are in the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut in Hartford.

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