



Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation

*Eastern Pequot
Tribal Nation
Tribal Council*

Acting Secretary David Bernhardt
US Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

February 28, 2019

*Katherine Sebastian
Dring, J.D.*
Chairwoman

Dear Honorable Acting Secretary David Bernhardt,

Brenda Geer
Vice Chairwoman

The Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation (EPTN), one of America's first people, is a state recognized tribe with a reservation established by the colonial government in 1683. This nation is located on one of the oldest, continually occupied reservations in the country.

Lynn Powers, MSM
Recording
Secretary

While the "Grand Jury probes Zinke's conduct on tribal casino petitions", the historic Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation declares that the US Department of Interior (DOI) was politically influenced by Senator Blumenthal and the State of Connecticut (CT). They engaged in a destructive lobbying campaign to persuade the DOI to overturn the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation's preliminary and final positive acknowledgment positive decisions. The tribe had worked for 22 years to submit over 70,000 pages of documentation to support their federal acknowledgment petition. Former Attorney General Blumenthal and 29 CT towns filed an appeal to the Interior Board of Indian Appeals and in 3 years DOI reversed the decisions. This DOI decision was unprecedented and a travesty of justice.

Valerie Gambrell
Treasurer

Ashbow Sebastian
Comptroller

*JoAnne Silva-
Njoku*
Corresponding
Secretary

La'Tasha Maddox
Councilor

Great opposition from the State of CT occurred because once the the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation became federally recognized they would have the right to open a casino.

Tyrone Gambrell
Councilor

Carole Maddox
Councilor

Former Attorney General Blumenthal explained in an Opinion Letter to Executive Director, Division of Special Revenue, Susan Townsley that the repeal of the games of chance statute during the January 6, 2003 Special Session, terminated this type of gambling effective January 7, 2003 in an effort to prevent federal allowance of more Indian casinos in Connecticut.

Natasha Gambrell
Councilor

Shianne Sebastian
Councilor

By resolution in 2003 the National Congress of American Indians "urged the State of Connecticut, its representatives and its towns to recognize its legal, historical, and political relationship with those tribes within Connecticut whose tribal, social, and political structures predate the Constitution of the United States, to respect the inherent sovereignty of those tribes and to engage in good faith bargaining regarding land acquisition, gaming compacting and other issues of mutual concern, and to refrain from using the Bureau of Indian Affairs regulatory process and the courts to delay a legitimate federal tribal recognition decision."

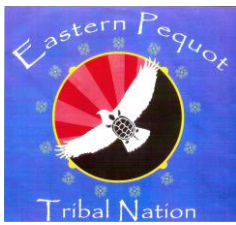
Mitchel Ray
Councilor

Derrick Strong
Councilor

Stephen Randall
Councilor

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Further during the federal acknowledgment regulatory hearings in 2014 the Connecticut Congressional delegation opposed the initial draft which was favorable to the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation. They stated that “a federally recognized tribe can claim privately owned land; establish its own zoning and land use rules; exercise quasi-sovereign governmental powers; avoid most state laws and taxation; and open additional gaming facilities.”

In 2014 Gov. Dannel P. Malloy wrote a letter to President Barack Obama opposing the initial draft of the federal acknowledgment regulations stating “the consequences would be devastating,” Malloy, noted all three tribes want to build casinos in the state. The final regulations were modified to include significant recommendations by the state in an attempt to block additional federally acknowledged tribes. In 2015 during the re-election of Sen. Richard Blumenthal, it was noted that “his tenure as Attorney General in Connecticut garnered him a reputation as an Indian fighter.”

In 2018 the CT Mirror reviewed casino lobbying by MGM and explained that the two federally recognized tribes benefited from Connecticut’s lobbying of the Interior Department to withdraw federal recognition from the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation and Schaghticoke Tribal Nation. James Cason faxed a letter to the tribes of DOI’s reversal in October 2005. Later Cason joined Zinke in the White House. The CT Mirror reported that according to Indian Country Today “stopping the other tribes from opening casinos was worth an estimated \$6 billion over the next decade to both of Connecticut’s federally recognized tribes.

The United States Constitution Amendment XIV Section 1 states, “No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

The Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation has existed for thousands of years protecting our tribal sovereignty and land, honoring our people and developing our resources. During recent centuries the tribe peacefully coexisted with other tribes, settlers and local communities in CT. Despite competing battles for economic success and the pursuit of a good life, we are working to make our communities and our government to government relationships better. The Historic Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation requests that CT, DOI and the US Department of Justice ensure equal protection and justice for all tribes.

Honoring our ancestors and the seven generations yet unborn,

Katherine Sebastian Dring, Chairwoman, Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation

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