

STATE OF NEW YORK

7759

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

June 6, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. JONES -- (at request of the Governor) -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT relating to settlement of certain land claims

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Land claims settlement. The legislature hereby finds that
2 long-standing disputes between the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Mohawk
3 Council of Akwesasne, and the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs, and the
4 state of New York, Franklin county and St. Lawrence county, have gener-
5 ated litigation in state and federal courts regarding property and other
6 taxation, and that the status of Mohawk lands has caused decades of
7 unrest and uncertainty for the citizens and residents of the Northern
8 New York region of this state. The legislature further finds that it is
9 in the best interests of all citizens, residents and political subdivi-
10 sions of this state to remove any uncertainty that such litigation or
11 disputes have created regarding the title to and jurisdictional status
12 of land within the state. The legislature recognizes that negotiated
13 settlement of these disputes will facilitate a cooperative relationship
14 between the state, the counties and the Mohawk. Therefore, the legisla-
15 ture declares that:

16 (a) Notwithstanding any other law, the state, through the governor,
17 may execute a land claims settlement agreement including, but not limit-
18 ed to, terms consistent with memoranda of understanding between the
19 governor, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and Saint Lawrence county
20 executed on May 28, 2014 and Resolution 188, as adopted by the Franklin
21 County Board of Legislature on June 5, 2023.

22 (b) Such land claims settlement shall be deemed ratified by the legis-
23 lature upon the governor's certification to the temporary president of
24 the senate, the speaker of the assembly, and the secretary of state,
25 that such agreement has received requisite federal approvals and the
26 underlying litigation has been dismissed with prejudice.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (c) Except as otherwise specifically provided in the agreement, the
2 state specifically reserves all its rights, as attributes of its inher-
3 ent sovereignty, recognized by the tenth and eleventh amendments to the
4 United States Constitution. Nothing in this section shall be construed
5 to affect the existing authority of the governor under the constitution
6 and laws of this state to execute land claims settlements.
7 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.