

VCNAA affirms support for the Vermont State Tribal Recognition process

Act 107 (S.222 of 2010) as **Title 1 VSA Chapter 23 § 851-856**

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The Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs (VCNAA), at a regular meeting on October 11, 2023, affirmed its understanding and support of the enabling statute in state law created by Act 107 (S.222) of 2010, and recorded as **Title 1 VSA Chapter 23 § 851-856** Native American Indian People. This legislation empaneled the said Commission of oversight along with a detailed process for application for state recognition of qualifying groups and has resulted, thus far, in the acknowledgement of four such communities.

While this political process has been criticized by some and its deliberations disparaged, these charges do not carry validity in substance or law. They are motivated by political ambition and competition under differing, imposed systemic governmental structures, derived from the history of European colonization of this continent with succession by today's governments of Canada and the USA. Attempts to interfere with this body of law constitute interference in the sovereignty of the State of Vermont and create harm among acknowledged in-state communities and the individuals that comprise them.

There are at least 63 state-recognized tribes in 11 of the 50 United States. Since 2010, at least 20 states have considered legislation that would adopt a formal process for recognizing tribes. The State of Vermont chose to engage and address this shared continental historical legacy with its own place-based self-examination and acknowledgement process. This body of law is both appropriate and applicable within these sociopolitical circumstances, founded upon the lived experiences of the people within these borders

The recognition process adopted by Vermont in 2010 is modeled after the Federal process and is considered one of the more robust and comprehensive in the country. It establishes a statutory political relationship between the State and qualifying petitioners that enables dialogue between the parties and provides for the mutual wellbeing for these citizens of both the state and their respective communities. This Commission stands in support of the duly-constituted Act 107 (2010) tribal recognition process and decries the claims and intentions of those who discredit its merits and objectives.

Approved by consensus of the VCNAA on October 11, 2023
Distributed on behalf of the Commission by Chair Rich Holschuh