

**Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe**  
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## **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY DECLARES MASHPEE WAMPANOAG “RESERVATION” LAND**

**MASHPEE, Ma. (January 8, 2015)** - The U.S. Department of Interior today officially designated Mashpee Wampanoag tribal lands as a reservation.

Under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, gaming on the Tribe's first acquired trust lands cannot commence until those lands are declared to be a reservation under the Indian Reorganization Act. The declaration was published in the federal register today - less than two months after the Tribe transferred formal ownership of approximately 321 acres of tribal lands in the Town of Mashpee and the City of Taunton to the federal government to be held in trust on behalf of the Tribe.

The reservation proclamation is the final step in several federal processes for the Tribe in re-establishing a sovereign land base for tribal self-government and economic development for all purposes under federal law. No lawsuits have been filed to challenge any of these federal processes or decisions to date.

“This cements our right to self-determination now and for future generations,” said Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council Chairman Cedric Cromwell.

He also reaffirmed the Tribe’s intention to begin construction of a world-class destination resort casino in Taunton this spring.

Yet, even as the Taunton casino project moves forward, Tribal leaders have also been busy dealing with more immediate infrastructure needs, such as the establishment of emergency services on Tribal lands. To that end, the Mashpee Tribe has entered into a Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (as detailed in the state Compact), as well as the City of Taunton.

Tribal leaders are in the final steps of signing a Mutual Aid Agreement with the Barnstable County Sheriff’s Department that would provide the Tribe with a booking room, a holding cell and dispatch services. Also, the Tribal Council is close to reaching a Mutual Aid Agreement with the Town of Mashpee.

“Re-establishing sovereignty and building a modern nation is no small task,” Cromwell said. “In addition to establishing formal relationships with state and municipal agencies in relation to emergency services, we’ve also adopted a body of criminal law that essentially mirrors state law. Working in conjunction with our Tribal court system, tribal law will be enforced by recently deputized tribal police officers, each of whom has extensive law enforcement experience.”

“After decades of painstaking work, we are overjoyed the government of the United States has officially issued this reservation proclamation, as we are witnessing the re-birth of our nation,” Cromwell said.

**About the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe:**

*The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, known as the People of the First Light, has inhabited present day Massachusetts for more than 12,000 years. After an arduous process lasting more than three decades, the Mashpee Wampanoag were re-acknowledged as a federally recognized tribe in 2007 and re-established sovereign territory in 2015. The Mashpee tribe currently has approximately 2,600 enrolled citizens.*