



## **STATEMENT OF FORMER SENECA NATION PRESIDENTS ON NEW YORK STATE'S EFFORTS TO EXTORT SENECA GAMING REVENUES**

**May 18, 2023**

As former Presidents of the Seneca Nation of Indians, we know full well the tactics employed by New York officials to try and steal away Seneca land, treaty rights, and economic resources. During our time in office, each one of us confronted efforts by the State and its governors to threaten Seneca Nation interests.

Unfortunately, we have been dealing with this threat for over 400 years. The Seneca Nation and the other Five Nations of the *Haudenosaunee* have been repeatedly targeted by New York officials to take away what is rightfully ours. In doing so, they have ignored our treaties with the United States and violated federal law intended to protect our interests.

This happened over 200 years ago when most of our lands were lost. But it has continued in recent years with the seizure of 10,000 acres of our Allegany Territory for the Kinzua Dam, the taking of 300 acres of our Cattaraugus Territory for the Thruway right-of-way, and the endless State attempts to assess taxes on our developing economy.

The battle has continued with the fight over our casino gaming revenues. 20 years ago, we agreed to the current gaming compact with the State thinking that a new chapter was being written based on cooperation, fairness, and mutual respect. Early on, that was the case. We secured our lands in Buffalo and Niagara Falls. We built our beautiful gaming facilities with zero economic assistance from the State.

And we gladly employed over 4,000 Western New Yorkers and thousands more as vendors and contractors.

But after 20 years of this relationship, we have seen the ugly side of the State's behavior. From the beginning, the State overbilled us for millions of dollars of regulatory costs. Fifteen years ago, the State put illegal gaming machines at the race-track casinos in our exclusivity zone that cost us \$300 million. And six years ago, the State filed a bogus arbitration proceeding to extort another \$800 million from us despite no clear payment requirement in our compact. Just last year, Governor Hochul attacked our Nation by freezing our bank accounts to cut off any further legal challenges to that bogus arbitration proceeding.

Today, we stand six months away from the expiration of our gaming compact with no assurance that the Seneca people and thousands of Western New Yorkers will have any economic security in the future.

We support the efforts of the current Seneca Nation officials to fight hard against these efforts to threaten the Seneca people and all of the people and local governments of Western New York.

We ask that all Western New Yorkers stand together to ensure that the Seneca Nation, our employees, and our vendors get the benefit of a fair, lawful, and timely new gaming compact with New York State.

Dennis J. Bowen, Sr. (1994-1996)

Todd Gates (2016-2018)

Maurice A. John, Sr. (2006-2008, 2014-2016)

Robert Odawi Porter (2010-2012)

Cyrus Schindler (2000-2002)

Michael Schindler (1996-1998)