



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

State-Native American committee holds hearing in Albany

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ September 21, 2011

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This morning the New York State Senate Select Committee on State-Native American Relations held a public hearing in Albany to advance a productive dialogue between Indian nations and state government. Representatives of the Oneida, Seneca, and St. Regis Mohawk Indian Nation met with a bipartisan group of state senators to talk about economic development and challenges facing their tribes.

Members of the Select Committee attending the hearing included Senator George Maziarz, Senator Timothy Kennedy, and Senator Patrick Gallivan.

Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane), Chairman of the Select Committee, said “It has been many, many years since there has been such a concerted effort to work with our Native American partners to advance our common interests. This was an opportunity for Senate members to learn more about the identities of the various nations and tribes, and what progress they are making on economic development, education, health care, and other quality of life issues. We will continue these discussions in a respectful and cooperative spirit.”

Senator Tim Kennedy (D-58th District) said, “New York has a long history of cooperation with the Native American nations throughout our state. The Senate Standing Committee on State-Native American Relations is a pivotal recognition of our cooperation and collaboration, and it will help us take important steps toward advancing our collective economic development goals. In Western New York, we’ve seen first-hand what can be accomplished by fostering economic partnerships with local Native American nations, specifically the Seneca Nation of Indians. As tribes like the Seneca Nation work to diversify their economies, New York State should continue to encourage any economic growth and job creation opportunities.”

Senator Maziarz noted that some ideas have already surfaced to advance future collaborations. One is to explore the appointment of a specific economic development liaison to the Native American nations to coordinate regional strategies with the newly-established Regional Economic Development Councils. Another is to invite the Native American representatives to a joint hearing with the Senate Commerce and Economic Development Committee.

“We have to keep the momentum moving forward,” Senator Maziarz said, “because we must acknowledge, sustain, and support the substantial role that Native American nations play in our economy. Their enterprises create good jobs for thousands of New Yorkers. We should continue the dialogue and we should work together to bring key projects to fruition.”

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