

February 1, 2019

To the Honorable and Certified Members of the Narragansett Indian Tribe:


As you are all aware, the Narragansett are the indigenous inhabitants of the lands that now encompass most of the State of Rhode Island and a portion of the State of Connecticut. If not for the humaneness and generosity of our Chief Sachems it is unlikely that Roger Williams would have survived his first winter here in our lands or had the opportunity to settle the land that later became the City of Providence. The generosity of the Narragansett has, unfortunately, never been fully acknowledged or reciprocated by the Colony or the State of Rhode Island.

The Tribe engaged in a long, arduous and patient struggle to be formally recognized by the United States government, despite maintaining a distinct tribal identity throughout its history. Finally, in 1983, the Narragansett Tribe was federally acknowledged and recognized by the United States of America and is the only federally recognized Indian Tribe in the State of Rhode Island. As such, it is the only Tribe afforded certain rights and privileges as a sovereign Indian nation recognized by the United States and the State of Rhode Island. See 48 Fed. Reg. 6177, Feb. 10 1983. The Narragansett Indian Tribe is governed by its Chief Sachem and Tribal Council and is a functioning tribal government.

In recent years, several organizations have either claimed to act on or on behalf of the Narragansett Indian Tribe, or to possess similar rights which are exclusive to the Narragansett Indian Tribe. Some of these organizations include the National Association for the Advancement of Indigenous People, the Federation of Aboriginal Nations of America, the Usquepaug Nehantick Nahaganset Tribe, the Ninigret Nehantick Nahaganset Tribe, the Mashapaug Nahaganset Tribe, and the Northern Narragansett Indian Tribe. None of these alleged tribes are, or ever have been, federally recognized Indian Tribes nor do they enjoy any type of sovereign status. Unfortunately, the proliferation of these groups has led to much confusion regarding not only their status but also their relationship to the Narragansett.

Please be advised that the Narragansett Indian Tribe has not and does not authorize these entities to act on, through, by, or on behalf of the Narragansett Indian Tribe. Any attempt by these or any other entities claiming to have recognized rights or status will not be tolerated by the Narragansett Indian Tribe. We intend to enforce our rights and identity against those who would try to speak for the Tribe or to claim any type of sovereign rights that they are not entitled to. We are specifically going to ask other federal and state government entities and any other public or private institutions to take note of the above and that if they have any interactions with these groups, they must recognize that the only federally recognized Indian Nation in the State of Rhode Island is the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

Respectfully,

  
Anthony Dean Stanton  
Chief Sachem  
Narragansett Indian Tribe