

# Hochul, Armstrong announce short-term extension of current gaming compact between New York & Seneca Nation of Indians

Discussions continue on new 20-year gaming compact

Gov. Kathy Hochul and Seneca Nation of Indians President Rickey L. Armstrong Sr. on Friday met in Buffalo and signed an extension of the current gaming compact between New York state and the Seneca Nation of Indians, which expires Dec. 9, 2023. The extension runs through March 31, 2024, and will automatically renew unless one of the parties decides not to renew it or a new gaming compact is agreed upon.

Hochul's team said, "The terms of the compact are unchanged from before and both sides will be meeting again in the coming weeks to continue negotiations on a long-term compact."

"Today, I returned to Buffalo to meet with President Armstrong and memorialize an extension of the current gaming compact to ensure the state and Seneca Nation can continue working towards a long-term resolution," Hochul said. "With the signing of this agreement, there is important momentum for negotiations around the compact. I remain committed to working with President Armstrong and the Seneca Nation in finalizing an agreement that is fair to all parties, and I look forward to more conversations in the coming weeks and months as



Gov. Kathy Hochul and Seneca Nation of Indians President Rickey L. Armstrong Sr. announce a short-term extension of the current gaming compact between New York state and the Seneca Nation of Indians while discussions continue on a new 20-year gaming compact. (Image courtesy of the Office of Gov. Kathy Hochul)

we continue to meet."

Armstrong Sr. said, "Over the last several weeks, our discussions with New York state, including face-to-face meetings with Gov. Hochul, have centered, in part, on the potential extension of our current compact, especially as the Dec. 9 expiration gets ever closer. As a result of those discussions between our governments, the Seneca Nation and New York state have agreed to a short-term extension of our current compact. As important, we have agreed to continue negotiations on a new compact. This short-term extension will provide additional time for our governments to complete compact negotiations and to seek all necessary approvals in accordance with Seneca Nation, New York state, and federal law.

"Under the extension, our three gaming properties will continue to operate without interruption, alleviating any concerns about potential impacts for our thousands of casino employees, which was a priority for the Nation.

"In our discussions, Gov. Hochul has expressed a desire to reset the relationship between our governments. No issue is of greater importance to the economies of Western New York and

the Seneca Nation than a fair compact. Tens of thousands of individuals, families and businesses across Western New York are depending on an agreement that secures the significant jobs, business opportunities, and economic benefits the Seneca Nation delivers to the Western New York economy. The short-term extension of our compact is an important step, but even more important work remains to be done. The Seneca Nation remains committed to negotiating honestly and directly with New York state on a compact that provides a fair and equitable economic and competitive environment for our gaming operations and the many people who depend on them."

New York State Senate Minority Leader Rob Ortt said, "I am pleased that a temporary extension of the current gaming compact between the Seneca Nation and New York state has been reached. However, the governor must continue to work towards a long-term agreement for the benefit of Niagara Falls and Western New York. Any future agreement must prioritize the host communities and benefit not only New York state, but the people of the Seneca Nation, as well."

## Town of Niagara zoning law change for self-storage facilities on the horizon

BY TIMOTHY CHIPP  
Contributing Writer

One of the final hurdles standing in the way of a Town of Niagara zoning law change has been cleared, paving the way for approval.

Niagara Town Council members are expected to vote on changing the permissions for self-storage facilities in the town at the meeting set for 6:30 p.m. Tuesday.

The law change, proposed in September, required permission from the Niagara County Planning Board before any local approval could happen, according to town Special Counsel Corey A. Auerbach.

Auerbach cited Section 239-M of the General Municipal Code in his explanation, which requires towns to present to the

Niagara County Planning Board any change in zoning ordinance or local law if there are county or state roads with zoning that will be affected by the proposed change.

In November, the Planning Board gave the proposal its stamp of approval, Auerbach said during the Town Board's December work session this past week, allowing the Town Board to consider the matter this month.

The proposed change will only affect commercially zoned property in the town, removing the option to construct what are deemed self-storage facilities in the business zoning.

Self-storage facilities would remain an available option in both light and heavy industrial zones should the change be ap-

proved Tuesday.

A Town Board public hearing was held on the matter in October, after which outgoing Supervisor Lee Wallace noted feelings there were too many of the facilities in the town for its size.

At the public hearing, town officials heard from a business owner who questioned the wording of the new law. He asked if the zoning changes included warehousing for business use.

He was assured by Wallace the law did not include warehouses. Wallace said the town would need to tighten the language in the law to avoid any misunderstandings or unintended consequences.

The board did not address any verbiage changes at the work session this past week.

In other Town of Niagara news, the board is also expected to take action Tuesday on approving a privately owned lift station at the approved site of the Amazon warehouse that has yet to begin construction.

Auerbach said the Amazon project's approval last year through the State Environmental Quality Review process was contingent upon a lift station, which is a sewer pumping mechanism, being installed at the warehouse.

Auerbach said the plan is for the station to tie directly into the county's sewer system in the area.

Amazon's developer partner, JB2 Partners, would pay for the station, Auerbach said.

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