

***Thank you Mr. Chairman. We want to take this opportunity to thank the members of this working group and the staff for all of their hard work over these past few months. On behalf of the Mohegan Tribe, we want to express our gratitude for the amount of time and effort that everyone has put into this important issue. The Mohegan Tribe has a long history of working collaboratively with their neighbors, local governments, state government, and the federal government. We have been directed by our elected Tribal leaders to take every step possible to do the same here today. We sincerely hope that this working group can find a consensus to move forward because we believe that the legislature should respect the ideas of everyone, particularly a fellow government.***

***If a consensus cannot be found, we would ask that we take no action..but to simply share the information that has been gathered which would respect the views of all members. This working group, was charged with addressing this issue for both federally recognized Native American Tribes. Therefore, the only fair path would be to not place one Tribe's interests above another.***

***The issue of dual taxation is important. Mohegan Tribal leaders have spoken out in support of addressing dual taxation in Connecticut and elsewhere, but that must be premised on the fact that the corrective action is implemented fairly for all involved and does not cause more disparities.***

***We all know there is a long history of theft of native lands, breaking of treaties, and forcing tribes into agreements that are not in their best interest. Both Tribes represented here today can attest to that. The fact that a state has taken the time to explore these issues in an open and transparent forum with the goal of correcting some of that mistreatment of Tribes says a lot about the state of Connecticut.***

***Before us today are three or four proposals. We understand and respect the proposal made by the secretary of OPM. These are difficult budget times and his position from a fiscal standpoint dictate a conservative approach requiring additional study to fairly achieve the goals of addressing dual taxation. The proposals that has been put forward by Senator Osten and the Mashantucket Pequots addresses the dual taxation issue for the Mashantucket Pequots, while ignoring the challenges that were forced upon the Mohegan Tribe by the state when the Mohegan Tribe was working to settle their land claims. Therefore, however well-intentioned this proposal may be, the Mohegan Tribal Council rejects the assertion that this proposal is good for the Mohegan people. We support addressing this flaw in our taxation system, but only if it is state policy enacted with parity for all Native American Tribal Nations being impacted. If recommended to the Connecticut General Assembly or adopted by them, this proposal will cause additional harm which in effect will run counter to the goals of this work to address systemic unfairness.***

***The proposal Mohegan has before you is fair, fiscally responsible, and puts both tribes on a level playing field and hears the concerns of both Nations. The best solution that does no harm is one that addresses the concerns of both tribes on the topic of dual taxation, and we remain committed to continue working toward such an agreement. Our team has been tasked by our Tribal leaders to work with all parties willing to recognize the importance of equity amongst all Tribes. But we must make clear, and will continue to reiterate, that the state should not enact any proposal that satisfies one tribe's concerns while both ignoring and further perpetuating a historic wrong placed upon another tribe on the very same issue of taxation. Both Tribes must agree..***

***Thank you again for your time, and trust that we can continue to work collaboratively, listen to all of the governments' interests and chart a fair and equitable solution.***