



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio and Assemblymen Kolb and Magee Introduce Legislation to Reimburse Counties Impacted by Indians Refusal to Pay Property Taxes: Bill has Bipartisan Support in Senate and Assembly

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO May 15, 2013

Senator Mike Nozzolio and Assemblymen Brian Kolb and Bill Magee today introduced legislation that is designed to end the destruction of the property tax base in Cayuga, Seneca, Madison and Oneida Counties resulting from the refusal of individuals to pay their property taxes based on their claims of individual Indian sovereignty. To date, the Cayugas' have refused to pay almost \$1.5 million in property taxes owed to Cayuga and Seneca Counties.

"It is critical that we enact this legislation to protect local taxpayers from those who refuse to pay property taxes based on their highly questionable claims of individual Indian sovereignty. Because of this, every year our local, hardworking taxpayers are forced to shoulder an increasingly unfair and costly burden because the Cayuga Indians refuse to pay their lawfully administered and rightfully owed property taxes. I believe that we must do everything possible to ensure the fair and equitable collection of these unpaid property taxes and we will continue our aggressive efforts to eliminate this unfair burden on the hardworking taxpayers of Cayuga and Seneca Counties, as well as other impacted areas of New York State," said Senator Mike Nozzolio.

This legislation, S.5209, would require New York State to reimburse local counties for unpaid school and property taxes on property that is owned by individual Indians, that has not been designated 'reservation land' by the federal government. As a result, Cayuga and Seneca Counties would receive ongoing financial assistance to offset unpaid property taxes currently owed to the counties, towns and school districts, thereby helping to reduce the tax burden on local taxpayers.

"The hard-working people of Cayuga and Seneca counties face a crippling tax burden, which is made even more challenging by the inability to collect property taxes on Native American sovereign claims," Assembly

Minority Leader Brian Kolb said. "For years, the refusal of so many to pay their share has devastated the local tax base and hampered localities' ability to pay for essential services. This legislation is a critical step to offer fair and equitable protection for taxpayers in these counties, as well as other areas of New York State."

This bipartisan legislation is also being sponsored in the New York State Senate by Senators James Seward, Joe Griffo and David Valesky. This measure is also being sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymen Gary Finch, Phil Palmesano and Bob Oaks.

"This legislation will protect the local property taxpayer from assuming the burden of the shortfall created by those Indians who refuse to pay their property taxes based on their claims of Indian sovereignty. I am pleased to have the opportunity to work with Assembly Minority Leader Kolb, my Assembly colleagues and Senators Mike Nozzolio and James Seward to adopt this important legislation," said Assemblyman Gary Finch.

"It is especially gratifying to have bipartisan support for this important proposal in both houses of the State Legislature. I want to thank my colleagues, and especially Senator Valesky and Assemblyman Magee for their bipartisan sponsorship of this legislation. I look forward to partnering with them as we work to enact this legislation and protect our local taxpayers," said Senator Mike Nozzolio.

"The refusal of the Cayuga Indians to pay property taxes continues to have a devastating impact on the taxpayers of Seneca County. On behalf of the residents of Seneca County, I applaud Senator Nozzolio and Assemblymen Kolb and Palmesano for their leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with them to reduce the tax burden on Seneca County residents," said Bob Hayssen, Chairman of the Seneca County Board of Supervisors.

"This legislation will protect our local taxpayers and ensure that they are not penalized because of the Cayugas' refusal to pay local school and property taxes," said Michael Chapman, Chairman of the Cayuga County Legislature. "This legislation will ensure the fair and equitable collection of property taxes and we thank Senators Mike Nozzolio and James Seward and Assemblymen Gary Finch and Bob Oaks for their efforts on behalf of our local taxpayers."

A virtual tour of the Cayuga Indian land holdings in Seneca Falls, can be found on Senator Nozzolio's website at <http://www.nysenate.gov/senator/michael-f-nozzolio>

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