



the Catawba Nation
Office of Tribal Government

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 16, 2020

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New Legislation Introduced by Key Members of Congress Reaffirms Land Trust Status of the Cleveland County, North Carolina, lands of the Catawba Nation

Land was taken into trust by the U.S. Department of Interior in March

KINGS MOUNTAIN, N.C. – The Catawba Nation today announced its support and appreciation of Tuesday's introduction of *the Catawba Indian Nation Lands Act (H.R. 8255)* in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Congressman G.K. Butterfield (NC) was joined in introducing the bipartisan bill by Congressman Jim Clyburn (SC), Congressman William Timmons (SC), Congressman Dan Bishop (NC), Congressman Joe Cunningham (SC), Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC), Congressman David Price (NC) and Congressman Joe Wilson (SC).

The bipartisan bill reaffirms the actions earlier this year of the Department of the Interior, following a thorough, years-long review, in taking 17 acres of land into trust status in Cleveland County, North Carolina, for the Catawba Nation.

The Catawba Nation's aboriginal lands extend to six North Carolina counties and farther north in the Piedmont of North Carolina, as evidenced by names such as Catawba County and Catawba College.

“The newly introduced legislation demonstrates the ongoing support from members of Congress in righting historical wrongs against the Catawba people,” said Chief Bill Harris of the Catawba Nation.

“We are pleased that this legislation will reaffirm the Interior Department's action recognizing the Catawba Nation's historical and ancestral ties to the lands in Kings Mountain, North Carolina. These are the lands of not just our ancestors, but also the hundreds of Catawba citizens that reside there today,” Harris said.

Harris noted that it is not unusual for Congress to reaffirm land-trust decisions by the Interior Department. The “Gun Lake Trust Land Reaffirmation Act” from 2014 and the “Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Land Affirmation Act” from 2019 are recent examples of such an action.



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The Catawba Nation recently broke ground on a major economic development project on the land that was taken into trust in Kings Mountain. The project is expected to create 4,000 permanent jobs at full buildout and thousands of construction jobs in the region.

“This legislation demonstrates there is strong support in Congress to affirm that the Department of Interior properly followed the applicable rules and regulations,” Harris said. “It also shows support for creating the jobs this project will bring as quickly as possible.”

Harris said the bill reaffirms the Administration's determination that the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act applies to the Catawba Nation and its lands located in North Carolina. This provision is critical to ensuring the Catawba Nation's gaming will be subject to an agreement that provides North Carolina with a role in the regulation of the facility.

The Catawba Nation's 1993 Settlement Agreement assigns the tribe a federal service area, recognizing its aboriginal ties and historical occupation of these lands. This service area includes six counties in North Carolina, including Cleveland County. Congress's original intent of this service area was to allow the tribe to grow and benefit within this area in North Carolina.

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