

Mohawk land deal in the works

Plan said to include \$100 million, hundreds of acres of property

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ALBANY -- Mohawk tribal leaders met with Gov. George Pataki on Tuesday to complete a proposed land claim settlement important to a plan to create a casino in the Catskills.

Tribal officials declined to provide details before a news conference today on the Franklin County reservation. But sources familiar with the deal said it improves on a 2003 agreement that later collapsed after the election of a new tribal government.

The deal, sources said, includes \$100 million for the Mohawks, with \$30 million coming from the state and \$70 million from the New York Power Authority; 215 acres along the St. Lawrence River; Long Sault and Croil islands; low-cost power from the state authority; and the right to buy thousands more acres.

The talks included three Mohawk groups: the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council, the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne.

A tribal spokesman, Brendan White, said the deal could be put to a tribal referendum around Thanksgiving. But Steven Tullberg, a Mohawk lawyer who was at the meeting with Pataki, said negotiations may not be over.

"I would not say that negotiations were concluded," Tullberg said. "There's ongoing settlement work that needs to be done."

The deal would have to be approved by Congress and that could take at least a year.

Mohawk chiefs have a deal with Caesars Entertainment to build a \$500 million casino in Monticello. Pataki has said he opposes granting gaming compacts to tribes until land claims are settled.

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