

Four area state legislators support Seneca offer - Buffalo News

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Some state lawmakers want to cut New York's government out of the process for sending casino revenue-sharing funds from the Seneca Nation to local governments and not-for-profit organizations.

State Sen. George D. Maziarz, R-Newfane; State Sen. Catherine M. Young, R-Olean; State Assemblyman Mark J.F. Schroeder, D-Buffalo and State Assemblyman Joseph Giglio, R-Gowanda, appeared with

Seneca leaders at a news conference today outside the tribe's Buffalo Creek Casino in downtown Buffalo.

All four said they support a Seneca Nation proposal to send a portion of money from Seneca-run casinos directly to local governments, rather than having the money pass through state government.

The legislators said they will push for passage of such a law by the state government. Young and Maziarz said they will introduce the law in the Senate, while Schroeder said he will introduce it before the Assembly.

"It would take out New York State as the middleman," Young said. "What we've seen from New York State is a lot of red tape, bureaucracy and delays in getting the money out the doors."

The Senecas are involved in a heated dispute with Gov. David A. Paterson over the tribe's refusal to make required 2009 and 2010 casino-revenue sharing payments to communities that host the Seneca casinos in Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Salamanca.

The governor says the Senecas are about \$200 million behind in the payments and are in violation of the Senecas' casino compact, the legal agreement with the state that allows the tribe to run casinos.

Two Seneca Nation leaders -- senior policy adviser Robert Odawi Porter and Tribal Council Chairman Richard E. Nephew -- spoke at today's news conference. They contend the tribe is

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withholding the payments because the state has violated the compact by establishing competing casinos at horse racing tracks.

Porter said the tribe prefers to send money directly to the local communities rather than having it pass through the state, which he said causes lengthy delays and red tape.

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