

CATAWBA TRIBE SUES FOR GAMING RIGHTS ON RESERVATION LAND  
"Study Shows Gaming Facility Would Create 3,966 New Jobs in York County"

The Catawba Indian Nation has filed a lawsuit against South Carolina seeking to enforce compliance with the Settlement Agreement the Tribe signed with the State of South Carolina in 1993.

William Harris, newly elected Chief of the Catawba Nation, says the purpose of the lawsuit is to assert the legal rights of the Catawba Tribe and, at the same time, to bring significant economic benefit to the Tribe and the York county area, including nearly 4,000 permanent new jobs. "The economic development we seek for the Tribe would also be a major boost to the local economy," Chief Harris said.

Confident that the Catawba Nation is entitled to open a gaming facility on reservation land, the Tribe recently commissioned an economic impact study by the Columbia, S.C.-based firm of Miley & Associates. That study reported the proposed gaming facility would generate over \$517 million in total initial economic impacts and 3,966 permanent jobs, including a projected hotel and entertainment complex. If the Catawba Tribe is successful in asserting its gaming rights, Chief Harris stressed that all gaming would be restricted to reservation property where the Catawba Tribe was promised gaming rights by federal and state law nearly 20 years ago.

The lawsuit asserts that the State of South Carolina is obligated to honor the promises contained in the Settlement Agreement and the failure to do so has deprived the Tribe of its legitimate claims. The Settlement came only after many years of struggle. According to the Settlement Agreement, signed during the administration of Governor Carroll Campbell, the Tribe was promised the ability to offer "...electronic play devices to the same extent that the devices are authorized by state law." More recently, South Carolina passed the Gambling Cruise Act, which authorizes by state law the operation of numerous electronic gaming devices. Under the terms of the Settlement, the Tribe believes that it should be able to offer those same games.

"The Tribe's ability to engage in gaming activities is vital to its economic self-sufficiency," Chief Harris said. "All we want is for the government to keep its promises and allow us to conduct gaming on our Reservation land." As is the case with many Native American tribes who were removed from their land and suffered decades of subjugation, the Catawba Indian Nation struggles with poverty and related issues. The type of facility the Catawba Tribe hopes to operate would create permanent positive impacts on the York/Lancaster area, the Catawba Indian Nation and their people.

Finally, if left up to Catawba, the fiscal impacts of the Catawba Gaming Facility operations would have a substantial positive impact on State government revenues, as the Tribe is committed to being a good citizen of its South Carolina community. The Miley Economic Impact Study may be viewed in its entirety at [mileyandassociates.com/reports/](http://mileyandassociates.com/reports/).

The Tribe is supported in its efforts by Sky Boat, LLC, and it is working with a team of local and national attorneys. According to Chief Harris, "With the law and justice on our side and such capable supporters and advocates, the Tribe is confident our rights will be vindicated."

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