

January 11, 2006

To: Kurt Chandler
Bureau of Indian Affairs

My name is Joseph Slivinski, I am the Madison County Highway Superintendent. I live in Canastota.

I would like to speak against the 17,000 acres of Oneida Nation Land being placed in Federal Trust.

In this county, we already have a lack of property tax revenues contributing to a reduction in public services and public infrastructure. Decreasing property tax potential will only make a bad situation worse.

I will use our Madison County Highway Department as an example:

- Recently, over a three-year period, we hadn't purchased any new trucks or construction equipment. This has resulted in increased repair costs to old, used equipment that should be replaced not repaired. We've had to weld frames on pickup trucks with well over 100,000 miles of use. This is a bad investment.
- Recently, we have been unable to replace a bulldozer, a road grader, a hydraulic excavator, a tree crane and many dump trucks.
- Inflation, rising fuel costs and increased steel prices has forced us to reduce our highway paving program by 10%. We've reduced the depth of asphalt used to repave our highways by 1/3. This will in turn reduce service life by 1/3.
- Our fuel costs have increased by 30% or \$110,000 in the past year. The costs of replacement parts have increased by 20% or \$50,000 in this past year.
- We have been unable to rehabilitate our Wampsville Highway Garage and Highway Office Building. The funds needed for the work exceed \$300,000.
- Our Wampsville Division is in dire need of a large salt storage structure that will cost between a half and three quarters of a million dollars.
- We have further postponed much needed repaving of the County Office Building and Court House parking lots with costs approaching a half million dollars.

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- Our lack of funding resources has also caused our department to almost totally depend on the availability of state/federal bridge replacement programs. We can no longer afford the one half to three-quarters of a million dollars we funded local bridge projects with. Waiting for these programs to be utilized will cause weight limit posting and bridge closure. This in turn will increase business and citizen transportation costs.
- In summary, Madison County needs all available property utilizing its infrastructure of roads and bridges to be paying its fair share of property taxes.

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