



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
July 1, 2020

CONTACT: Charity R. Clark
Chief of Staff
802-828-3171

**ATTORNEY GENERAL DONOVAN & ABENAKI CHIEF STEVENS URGE
GOVERNOR TO SIGN BILL RECOGNIZING ABENAKI'S HISTORIC CLAIM**

Free Hunting & Fishing Licenses for Native Peoples Would Extend Beyond Vermont Borders

MONTPELIER – Attorney General T.J. Donovan and Chief Don Stevens from the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation thank the Vermont Legislature for passing H.716, which will add citizens of Vermont's [State-recognized](#) Native American Indian Tribes to the [list](#) of people eligible for a free permanent license from Vermont's Fish and Wildlife Department. In February, Attorney General Donovan and Chief Stevens together [called upon the Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign H.716](#). Because the benefit would extend to Native Peoples residing outside of Vermont, the new measure would also promote a much-needed influx of new sportspeople to Vermont's hunting and fishing communities. In addition, the bill would help Vermont partner with Native Peoples to promote environmental, educational, and conservation initiatives.

“The Abenaki have hunted and fished these lands for centuries,” said Attorney General Donovan. “The Legislature is attempting to correct a historic wrong by passing a bill that will ensure Native Peoples have access to free hunting and fishing licenses in Vermont. I urge Governor Scott to do the same.”

“In this era of Social Justice Reform, I am pleased that Abenaki voices are being heard and considered,” said Chief Stevens. “I say wliwni (thank you) to all who support the Abenaki people. H.716 recognizes and reaffirms our ancient agreements with Europeans to always retain the rights to hunt and fish throughout our territories. Not only does this bill allow our citizens access to our natural food sources, honoring our agreements is the right thing to do. The Governor has publicly stated that he wishes to uplift minority populations, bring more people into Vermont woods, and to boost visitors to Vermont. This bill achieves all of these things while honoring the original stewards of this land.”

Having passed both the House and Senate, H.716 is now on its way to Governor Phil Scott.

###