



Vermont Abenaki leadership condemns Canadian Abenaki's propaganda attacks motivated by greed

We, the leaders of the four State-recognized Abenaki Tribes in Vermont, the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi, the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation, the Koasek Traditional Band of the Koas Abenaki Nation, and the Elnu Abenaki Tribe, condemn the continued malicious attacks on our people's existence. Our tribal citizens, elders and children, are severely harmed by the false, greed-inspired attacks launched by the leadership of the Canadian Odanak Abenaki. We are disappointed that local media outlets continue to provide a platform to spread malicious propaganda which are only opinion based. Through hard-fought struggles over centuries, our relatives maintained their culture, care for this land, and the ability to teach our heritage and lived experience. Once again, we are faced with sickening attacks challenging our existence. We refuse to be suppressed by hate speech and will overcome these challenges as we have in the past, with truth, compassion and strength.

Over a decade ago, after stringent and comprehensive investigation, the State of Vermont recognized that our four tribes were valid indigenous entities, resulting in State recognition. Act 107 (2010) Sec. 3. 1 V.S.A. § 852, Sec. 4. 1 V.S.A. § 853, et al. The false narrative put forth by Odanak and their supporters, asserting that the State recognition process was invalid, fails to account for actual facts and our long interaction with the State and Federal Government. The Vermont Abenaki have maintained a constant, governmental presence in Vermont which Odanak has acknowledged over the years.

To find out more about Vermont Abenaki history and factual information about potential Odanak US based land claim exploration, please visit: <https://www.abenakialliance.org/resources> for more information.

The recent so-called "report" issued by Odanak is junk science, compiled with bias and full of factual and interpretive errors. Every professional organization of anthropological, sociological, genealogical researchers has strict ethical and moral codes that protect against researching living individuals without consent, a standard violated by Odanak's energy-company-fueled, flailing and false attacks on our people. The actual experts, such as those testifying at the Vermont Legislature on April 23, 2025, all agree that relying on documentation created by white people

with their own biases against native people, is not a valid way to determine ancestry. Rather, those experts found conclusively that the four recognized tribes are direct descendants of Abenaki people living in Vermont. All scholars and people concerned with human rights should condemn the junk science issued by Odanak's leadership with the obvious ulterior goal of facilitating Odanak's desire to make millions of dollars from land claims in Vermont.

The four recognized Vermont Abenaki Tribes, our governing bodies and citizens, work hard every day to support local communities with food shelves, elder assistance, environmental stewardship, and cultural enhancement activities. These efforts rarely get the attention of our local news media who instead report on Canadian attacks on our legitimacy. The Odanak government has done nothing to protect and preserve Abenaki people's health, welfare and cultural heritage in Vermont. Instead, they seek to claim the land as theirs and erase the rights of Vermont and US Abenaki citizens who have fought to defend the very free speech that is now used against our people.

The leaders of the four State-recognized tribes in Vermont remain focused on protecting and preserving our tribal citizens, our heritage and our cultural resources during these increasingly challenging times. We agree with Odanak's leaders that native people have a right to self-determination, including the right to determine who is part of their tribe or nation. Our tribes and people do not take anything away from Abenaki people in Canada, nor do we prevent Canadian Abenaki from sharing their culture and heritage with whomever they choose. We simply and humbly request that Vermonters consider the harm these false attacks on our people are causing and show love and support to your Abenaki neighbors who are citizens of the State-recognized tribes. Talk to us, learn our stories firsthand and allow us all to mutually benefit from the engagement.

Brenda Gagne, Chief, St. Francis/Sokoki Band of Missisquoi

Donald Stevens, Chief, Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe

Shirly Hook, Chief, Koasek Traditional Band of the Koas Abenaki Nation

Roger Longtoe Sheehan, Chief, Elnu Abenaki Tribe