



## *Narragansett Indian Tribe*

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Dear Tribal member,

Approximately two years ago, The Tribe approved the Hemp initiative. We worked to get a bill passed in RI that would allow us to become Hemp farmers while also following the U.S. Farm Bill.

The first task was to identify land for this endeavor. The obvious place was the Tribe's Crandall farm in Westerly RI. It has the soil content we need and the seclusion as far as entrance and exit when it comes to growing Hemp under the law. The biggest issue facing us was infrastructure. The farm needs a modern infrastructure to be successful as no industrial farm can succeed realistically without proper water and electricity. To update the infrastructure, we also needed the financial backing to make it happen. About a year ago, I asked John Brown under his work and travel through NITHPO to keep an eye out for a viable opportunity to get water at Crandall farm. This leads to where we are today.

A few months back John was doing work under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq. He informed me that he was going to be involved in a mitigation that involved water with a power company doing work in Burrillville RI. I requested that he explore getting the infrastructure needed at the farm. The company was looking for a secondary water source, after the Situate Reservoir its primary water source, and was willing to work with the Tribe. They would put in the water infrastructure at the farm with the understanding that the tribe would become a secondary water source. In return for this option, the company would pay the tribe a flat rate of \$222,000 a year. If they used the well, the Tribe would charge them the municipal rate for any water used. This agreement falls under Section 106 of the NHPA and 38 CFR part 800, effective August 5, 2004.

I also recently met with the RI congressional delegation about putting the Crandall farm in trust for farming, specifically for the Hemp initiative as well as other agricultural activities. I understand that when the water agreement received media attention, most people if not all immediately assumed that this initiative would take place on the Tribe's reservation in Charlestown RI. This is incorrect although the Tribe should consider putting some wells on the trust property for future purposes like fire suppression and other infrastructure updates. These

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additional purposes can be discussed when we have the opportunity. However, the sole purpose at this time is to bring the Crandall farm up to modern standards.

Lastly, there has been concern about the Tribal Council and their role in this project if any. Please understand a Tribal Court Order specifically identified the role of the current council once seated was to get a general election up and going. All other duties that needed immediate attention fell to the chief sachem, who could delegate tasks and did so with this project through NITHPO under Section 106.

I hope this helps clear up some of your concerns,

Chief Sachem Matthew Thomas

10/24/17

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