



GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE



News From VPCGA at the General Assembly

February 3, 2010

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Dear Member,

Tribal Bill on Tax Issues Gets Preliminary OK

As we have previously reported, Virginia Indian Tribes have turned their attention to the General Assembly in an attempt to jump start their effort to gain Federal recognition. The congressional bill to accomplish this has been stalled since Virginia's Attorney General ruled that it needed to be amended to prevent the possibility of tax evasion in the Commonwealth. Yesterday, a Senate committee approved legislation by defeating gubernatorial candidate Creigh Deeds to allow the states to establish "contacts" with Federally recognized tribes. However, the legislation ignores that as sovereign nations, the tribes will be exempt from State and Federal laws. We, along with the Virginia Wholesalers Association and Sheetz, opposed the measure. The vote was 9-6 in favor of the bill which now goes to the whole Senate later this week.

The text of the bill can be found at the end of this article. The tribes are also pushing a slightly different version in the House that will be heard this afternoon.

Subject to the approval of the General Assembly, the Governor may enter into a compact with any Virginia Indian tribe that has been officially recognized by the Commonwealth and has also obtained official recognition by the United States government as a self-governing community. Such compact shall encompass issues related to the tribe's right to self-governance and intercourse with the Commonwealth, including but not limited to taxation, zoning, and compliance with environmental laws.