



2 L.I. Tribes Fighting Cigarette Tax Laws

NEW YORK -- Two Long Island American Indian groups are protesting a law that would tightly regulate their businesses' sale of [tax-free cigarettes](#), *Newsday* reported.

At a news conference Wednesday, the Shinnecock and Unkechaug communities voiced opposition to a state law that would stop Indian stores from selling tax-free cigarettes to non-Indian customers, the paper reported.

The new law, though, would make an Indian-owned business buy cigarettes at the taxed price, said Tom Bergin, spokesman for the state's Department of Tax and Finance. Later, the government would reimburse the business for the number of packs that were bought by Indian customers, who aren't required to pay the tax, the paper reported.

The new law, approved by the state Legislature and signed by Gov. George Pataki, was supposed to take effect March 1. But the state tax department asked for a review of amendments to the law first, and the review is not completed, the paper reported.

On Long Island, the Shinnecock and Unkechaug tribes said the state tax law challenges the groups' businesses and, ultimately, their culture, the paper reported.

-- NYSSCPA.org News Staff

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