



the Catawba Nation

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Catawba Nation Responds to Misleading Comments, Reaffirms Commitment to Tribal Sovereignty and Responsible Economic Development, and Job Creation

Rock Hill, SC – The Catawba Nation today issued a formal response to recent comments by former tribal officials Jason Harris and Dwayne Rogers. These statements were made in support of a proposed non-native casino project in Santee, SC—a project owned and developed by outside business interests, not the Catawba Nation.

“The Santee project is not sanctioned by our tribal leadership and undermines our sovereignty,” said Brian Harris, Chief of the Catawba Nation. “The Catawba Nation, despite being a federally recognized Native American tribe in South Carolina, has for 30 years been prohibited from operating casino gaming on its lands, when now more than 240 tribes across the country are allowed to do so in their own home states to benefit economic development for their people, including in neighboring North Carolina. The proposal sidelines the Tribe entirely, while offering long-term benefits to private developers at the expense of our people, and the state of South Carolina.”

While Jason Harris and Dwayne Rogers have promoted the project as a win for the Tribe, both have known connections to the developer in question. Their advocacy raises concerns about conflicts of interest and a disregard for tribal autonomy.

The Tribe clarified that any future gaming project must be owned and controlled by the Catawba Nation to ensure accountability, transparency, and long-term benefit for all tribal members.

The Executive Committee of the Catawba Nation jointly released the following statement in opposition to the non-tribal casino project: “Leadership means protecting our people’s future, not trading it for personal gain. We have renewed our efforts to reverse the injustice to our people in the state, and are in the process of working toward a fairer settlement agreement that would allow us to operate casino gaming and give our people more opportunities for economic development. We want to work with the State of South Carolina to create jobs and economic impact that will drive real revenue and benefit all South Carolinians. We urge state leaders and the public to stand with us in ensuring jobs and economic freedom for the Catawba people.”

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