

Mashpee Wampanoag: Feds have ordered reservation to be 'disestablished,' land taken out of trust

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A wooden sign advises motorists of the location of Mashpee Wampanoag tribal lands in Massachusetts.

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The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs has notified the Mashpee Wampanoag that their reservation will be disestablished and the land taken out of trust, the tribe revealed Saturday.

Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt notified the Mashpee Wampanoag of his decision on Friday, tribe Chairman Cedric Cromwell stated on the [tribe's website](#).

"[The] action was cruel and it was unnecessary. The Secretary is under no court order to take our land out of trust. He is fully aware that litigation to uphold our status as a tribe eligible for the benefits of the Indian Reorganization Act is ongoing," Cromwell stated. "It begs the question, what is driving our federal trustee's crusade against our reservation?"

The Mashpee Wampanoag have been involved in a prolonged legal battle over 321 acres of land in Taunton and a proposal to build a casino there.

A bill, [Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Reservation Reaffirmation Act \(H.R. 312\)](#), sought to recognize and protect what was described as "tribal homeland." It was passed by the House on May 15, 2019 but failed to win passage in the Republican-controlled Senate.

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