

Sustenance Fishermen Alert

Please be advised that Maine Attorney General, William J. Schneider, has issued a legal opinion to Maine's Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Colonel of the Maine Warden Service, stating that the Penobscot River is not part of the Penobscot Indian Reservation. As a result, tribal members engaged in sustenance fishing on the river are at risk of prosecution by Maine law enforcement officers if they fish without a state permit or otherwise not in accordance with state law.

Chief Francis has expressed our disagreement to Attorney General Schneider, and the Nation has commenced legal action in federal court to protect the rights of tribal members to take fish for their sustenance from the river, free from state authority. While attempts are being made to avoid conflicts, until the matter is resolved, tribal members should be aware of the situation and related risks. They should cooperate fully if confronted by state law enforcement officials and immediately report any incidents to the Director of Natural Resources. Questions about this issue should be directed to the Director of Natural Resources.