
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1809 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY RABB, MADDEN, MAYES, HOWARD, SANCHEZ AND DALEY,
NOVEMBER 8, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, NOVEMBER 8, 2023

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 54 (Names) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
2 Statutes, in trademarks, further providing for definitions,
3 providing for Native American trademarks, establishing the
4 Native American Trademarks Fund and providing for
5 administrative powers and duties relating to Native American
6 trademarks and for cancellation of marks.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Section 1102 of Title 54 of the Pennsylvania
10 Consolidated Statutes is amended by adding a definition to read:

11 § 1102. Definitions.

12 The following words and phrases when used in this chapter
13 shall have, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the
14 meanings given to them in this section:

15 * * *

16 "Senior user." The oldest or original user of a mark,
17 trademark, trade name or service mark.

18 * * *

19 Section 2. Title 54 is amended by adding sections to read:

20 § 1127. Native American trademarks.

1 (a) General rule.--Native American names and use of
2 likenesses shall be considered subject to trademark and
3 registered by the department as trademarks. These shall include:

4 (1) Names of Native American nations, tribes, clans,
5 bands and other collective names for groups of Native
6 Americans, including the anglicized and original names in the
7 group's native language.

8 (2) Identifiers for Native American groups, such as
9 tribal insignias, flags, emblems or tribal-identifying fabric
10 patterns.

11 (3) Symbols, mascots, logos or other depictions of
12 Native American culture for which Native Americans have
13 established and traditionally used, including ritual pipes,
14 weapons, headdresses, clothing, medicine and other cultural
15 signifiers.

16 (b) Ownership.--Ownership of the trademarks described in
17 subsection (a) shall be as follows:

18 (1) For identifiers associated with a specific nation,
19 tribe or other collective Native American group, trademark
20 rights shall be reserved to and considered the exclusive
21 property of the federally recognized organization
22 representing that Native American group. The department shall
23 contact the specific nation, tribe or other collective Native
24 American group to inform them of the ownership of trademarks
25 and their rights in this Commonwealth.

26 (2) For identifiers not associated with a specific
27 nation, tribe or other collective Native American group,
28 trademark rights shall be reserved in trust by the department
29 to and considered the exclusive property of the department,
30 on behalf of the Commonwealth.

1 (3) Identifiers that have not previously been associated
2 or claimed by a specific nation, tribe or other collective
3 Native American group, but which are later claimed by a
4 specific nation, tribe or other collective Native American
5 group, shall be reviewed by the department upon the request
6 of any person or the specific nation, tribe or other
7 collective Native American group. If the claim is approved by
8 the department, the department shall award the trademark to
9 the person or the specific nation, tribe or other collective
10 Native American group.

11 (c) Restriction on commercial use.--The commercial use of a
12 Native American trademark shall be restricted to the owner of
13 the registered trademark or person that obtains the owner's
14 consent for its commercial use. Failure to obtain consent for
15 the use of the trademark shall be considered improper use of the
16 trademark and may be remedied by an action authorized in this
17 chapter.

18 (d) Senior users under common law trademarks.--In a case in
19 which a Native American symbol or other identifier in use has
20 been recognized as a common law trademark, the Native American
21 group shall be considered the senior user of the trademark
22 unless the department determines that the name or other
23 identifier was not in use by members of the Native American
24 group before August 27, 1935.

25 (e) Nature of trademark recognized by department.--A Native
26 American trademark recognized by the department as registered or
27 common law trademarks shall not be considered abandoned, diluted
28 or generic.

29 (f) Department authorized to enter into agreements relating
30 to commercial use.--The department may enter into agreements for

1 the commercial use of Native American trademarks, including the
2 use of likenesses, for trademarks it holds in trust and that are
3 not subject to ownership assessment under this chapter.

4 (g) Fees authorized.--The department shall charge a fee to
5 non-Native American commercial users for their use of Native
6 American trademarks held in trust by the department, on behalf
7 of the Commonwealth under this chapter. The department shall by
8 rule or regulation prescribe the amount of the fee.

9 (h) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following
10 words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this
11 subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "Department." The Department of State of the Commonwealth.
13 § 1128. Native American Trademarks Fund.

14 (a) Establishment.--The Native American Trademarks Fund is
15 established as a separate fund in the State Treasury.

16 (b) Deposit.--The department shall deposit into the fund any
17 fee or other financial benefit received by the Commonwealth from
18 Native American trademarks held in trust under this chapter.

19 (c) Use of fund.--The money of the fund is appropriated to
20 the department on a continuing basis and shall be used for the
21 purpose of supporting cultural and educational initiatives that
22 benefit Native American communities in this Commonwealth.

23 (d) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following
24 words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this
25 subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

26 "Department." The Department of State of the Commonwealth.
27 § 1129. Administrative powers and duties relating to Native
28 American trademarks.

29 (a) Department.--The department shall have the following
30 powers and duties to administer the provisions of section 1127

1 (relating to Native American trademarks):

2 (1) Assess all applications by Native American nations,
3 tribes and other collective Native American groups for
4 ownership of trademarks qualifying under this chapter.

5 (2) Make available a process by which Native American
6 groups may lay claim to, contest or otherwise assert
7 ownership over trademarks held in trust by the department on
8 behalf of the Commonwealth.

9 (3) Arbitrate any disagreement or dispute over the
10 ownership of Native American trademarks, including those held
11 in trust under section 1127.

12 (4) Reject any trademark application that depicts or
13 relates to a derogatory Native American stereotype, including
14 name, logo or symbol.

15 (b) Attorney General.--The Office of the Attorney General
16 may seek remedies as described in section 1125 (relating to
17 remedies) on behalf of unclaimed or unattributed Native American
18 common law trademarks recognized under section 1126 (relating to
19 common law rights). Any damages recovered shall be deposited
20 into the Native American Trademarks Fund.

21 (c) Judicial consideration.--The courts of this Commonwealth
22 shall give Native American groups due consideration as the
23 senior user of common law trademarks depicting names, logos,
24 symbols or other cultural artifacts associated with their
25 respective group.

26 (d) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following
27 words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this
28 subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

29 "Department." The Department of State of the Commonwealth.
30 § 1130. Cancellation of marks.

1 (a) Duty of department.--The department shall cancel all
2 trademarks described under section 1127(a) (relating to Native
3 American trademarks) that exist prior to the effective date of
4 this section unless the trademarks are held by or registered to
5 a group formally representing a Native American group. Current
6 trademark owners shall be given not more than one year to
7 negotiate the continued commercial use of Native American
8 trademarks with the department.

9 (b) Notice.--The department shall issue a formal notice of
10 cancellation to the registered owners of trademarks canceled
11 under this section.

12 (c) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following
13 words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this
14 subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

15 "Department." The Department of State of the Commonwealth.
16 Section 3. This act shall take effect in 60 days.