



## PRESS RELEASE

### **ABENAKI IDENTITY MISAPPROPRIATION: THE SHELBURNE MUSEUM MUST END ITS COLLABORATION WITH FALSE ABENAKI GROUPS**

**Ndakina, August 6, 2025** – The Abenaki Council of Odanak and the Abenaki Council of W8linak express their deep indignation at the Shelburne Museum’s decision to continue its collaboration with so-called “Abenaki” groups recognized by the State of Vermont as part of the Perry Center for Native American Art project.

The Councils of Odanak and W8linak call on the museum to reconsider its partnerships and to commit to an ethical approach that respects the rights and sovereignty of authentic Indigenous Peoples.

Although ambitious, this initiative is based on a serious misrepresentation: it excludes the true Abenaki of New England and contributes to their historical and cultural erasure. By choosing to associate with groups that have no genuine connection to the Abenaki Nation, the Shelburne Museum is endorsing a form of identity fraud and cultural appropriation that is unacceptable.

Odanak and W8linak strongly denounce the composition of the museum’s so-called “Indigenous” advisory committee, as well as the individuals highlighted during last month’s inauguration ceremony. None of these individuals are members of the Abenaki Nation, nor are they connected by kinship or history to the survivors of the Abenaki people. These individuals have not endured the hardships of colonization, war, forced displacement, residential schools, or assimilation. Today, they are claiming an identity that does not belong to them, to the detriment of authentic Indigenous Peoples.

Rigorous academic research and investigative journalism conducted by respected media outlets have confirmed these facts. It is time for cultural institutions like the Shelburne Museum to take responsibility and stop legitimizing impostors.

Odanak and W8linak expect concrete and immediate action from the Shelburne Museum to correct this serious wrongdoing.

#### **About Abenaki Heritage**

*Abenaki Heritage* is an organization founded by the Councils of Odanak and W8linak, along with W8banaki, the Tribal Council of the Nation. Established in 1979, W8banaki’s mission is based on three pillars: representation, development, and administration.

Through Abenaki Heritage, the political representatives of Odanak and W8linak, supported by W8banaki, are leading the current mobilization campaign targeting their members residing in the United States.

**For more information:** [abenakiheritage.org](http://abenakiheritage.org)

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**Source:** Abenaki Heritage

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