

Tesla to Open Store in CT

Tesla Store to Open on Tribal Land in CT

Tesla, frustrated for years by the legislature in its attempts to obtain permission to open stores in Connecticut, is now opening an outlet where the state rules don't apply: the Mohegan Tribal land. Tribal land exists outside state jurisdiction and is subject only to federal law.

This tactic has been previously used by Tesla in New Mexico, where it has opened 2 outlets on tribal land, and in New York, where it has announced an agreement to build on Oneida Nation land about 20 miles east of Syracuse. New York has a limited number of Tesla stores, but this came about via a negotiation with the dealerships. The franchise laws there are still in place. This limited exception arrangement applies only to Tesla (i.e. not Rivian or Lucid) and caps the store count. Tesla has been chafing at this limit for a long time. Every Tesla store or gallery in NY is in New York City, Westchester County, or Long Island. The entire upstate region has been unserved.

The new Tesla facility, to be located at a former Victoria's Secret outlet at the Mohegan Sun Casino, will sell and deliver vehicles. Test drives will be available. Renovation of the space is set to commence imminently and should be finished at some point this fall. Deliveries will begin before the facility is completed, and we will publish an update when that information is finalized. It is not a service-center.

Mohegan Sun is located about 44 miles from Hartford, 54 miles from New Haven, and 93 miles from Stamford. Stamford is the heart of Fairfield County, which is Tesla Central. And that is

the limitation of opening on tribal land – it is not near the big population centers. Nonetheless, it will make a material difference for residents of the eastern part of the state. It is our expectation that Mount Kisco will remain a delivery option for customers in western CT. We are also waiting to hear the word on whether deliveries to CT customers will be enabled at the forthcoming Chicopee, MA location (10 miles over the state line off I-91. It will be a while before that large facility is built.)

A sales and delivery facility on tribal land does not mean that the company will stop its efforts to win the right to open stores in CT (a.k.a. direct sales). This could be viewed as planting a flag by Tesla, as the legislature has not acted in the interests of its constituents, over 80% of whom support allowing direct sales. On the other hand, the facility will open and the dealers will see that the world isn't coming to an end. (A lengthier discussion of direct sales, following the Transportation Committee's failure to raise the direct sales bill in the 2023 legislative session, can be found [here](#).)

The obvious follow-on question is whether Rivian and Lucid will do the same thing. A lot of people come to these tribal casinos. It is good business for both parties.

According to the Mohegan Sun press release, Tesla will work with Mohegan to incorporate Tribal members and Mohegan Sun Team Members into its workforce development program.

We look forward to a future post about the new sales center when they have the grand opening in the fall.

Photo credit: Paul Braren