



Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation Business Committee

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tribal Leadership in Action: Fond du Lac Band Delegation Champion Tribal Interests in Nation's Capital

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa – Cloquet, Minnesota (May 13, 2024) – Last week, Chairman Kevin Dupuis Sr. and a delegation of Fond du Lac Band staff demonstrated exceptional dedication and effectiveness during their recent visit to Washington, D.C. Their intensive two-day itinerary, packed with meetings with congressional members and federal agencies, underscored the Band's commitment to advancing tribal sovereignty and securing vital resources for their community.

Lance Northbird, Cultural Resources Project Manager for the Fond du Lac Band, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to represent tribal interests in the nation's capital. "Direct funding is essential in moving forward to further establish our tribal sovereignty," Northbird emphasized. "Normalizing our representation in all governing spaces is vital to our youth, elders, and all ages in-between."

Arianna Northbird, Environmental Program Manager for the Fond du Lac Band, highlighted the significance of being present at the decision-making table. "This opportunity will shape my future understanding in funding, policy, capacity building, and enforcing tribal sovereignty," Northbird noted, reflecting on the trip's potential impact.

Vannessa Ray-Hodge, Fond du Lac Band's outside legal counsel from Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Endreson & Perry LLP, commended Chairman Dupuis Sr. and Fond du Lac Band staff for their outstanding performance and the positive outcomes achieved during the trip. "Their efforts underscore the importance of advocacy and collaboration with the federal government in supporting tribal sovereignty," Ray-Hodge remarked.

Throughout the meetings, it became evident that Chairman Dupuis Sr. and the Band's consistent presence in Washington, D.C., have cultivated robust and positive relationships at the highest levels of Congress and federal agencies. The Chairman's engagements, including a meeting with Congressman Tom Cole (Oklahoma, 4th District; *Chickasaw Nation Member*) Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, garnered strong support for Indian country. Senior congressional members expressed a keen interest in meeting with the Band and other tribes in Minnesota to better understand the needs of Indian country.

Chairman Dupuis Sr.'s testimony before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations was met with appreciation, highlighting his dedication to presenting the Band's priorities effectively. Band staff articulated the significance of various programs in preserving the Band's way of life, earning commitment from Senate and Congressional members to collaborate on addressing these priorities.

Engagement with federal agencies resulted in key commitments necessary for continued progress on addressing and resolving the Band's issues. These commitments signify a significant step forward in ensuring the well-being and prosperity of the Fond du Lac Band and Indian country at large.

The Fond du Lac Band's successful advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C., underscore their ongoing dedication to tribal interests and collaboration with federal stakeholders.