



## *Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians*

*Executive Branch of Tribal Government  
Office of the Chief Executive*

*Via E-mail*

Virgil Wind  
Chief Executive  
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe  
43408 Oodena Drive  
Onamia, MN 56359

September 30, 2024

The Honorable Tina Smith  
U.S. Senate  
720 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Enact Section 10 of the Tribal Tax and Investment Reform Act

Senator Smith:

Chi miigwech (many thanks) for taking the time to meet with me while I was in Washington, D.C. on September 17, 2024. As I reflect on my trip to the Nation's capital, I think about the generations of Mille Lacs Band members and elected officials of Congress that have worked together to promote the well-being of all individuals residing within the boundaries of our jurisdictions and the responsibility of my administration and your office to continue this tradition. In embarking on a new era in the Mille Lacs Band's history, I hope you will contact me directly and that our line of communication always remains honest and open.

While we might not agree on every issue, I am confident that we can find ways to work together effectively to better our shared constituents. As we prepare to head into the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, supporting Section 10 of the Tribal Tax and Investment Reform Act (H.R. 8318 as introduced in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress), is one way to do this.

Section 10 of the Tribal Tax and Investment Reform Act clarifies that benefits provided by the Mille Lacs Band and other Tribal governments through their General Welfare Exclusion (GWE) programs are excluded from income and resources tests when the Social Security Administration (SSA) determines an individual's eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other programs. Many states, including Minnesota, use SSA's income and resource tests for determining eligibility for their own assistance programs. Without this necessary change in the law, the well-being of our most vulnerable Band members is put at risk. While the Band recently implemented a new GWE program that is intended to meet the strict requirements of the SSA and State of Minnesota's Department of Human Services, the Band's solution is imperfect and does not fully meet the needs of our disabled members. This is why we need your help to enact language specifically directing SSA to promote their best interests.

**Letter from Chief Executive Virgil Wind to Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN)**

**September 30, 2024**

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For any questions on the Mille Lacs Band's GWE program and/or to discuss the need for enacting Section 10 of the Tribal Tax and Investment Reform Act, please do not hesitate to reach out. Feel free to contact me any time by e-mail at [virgil.wind@millelacsband.com](mailto:virgil.wind@millelacsband.com) or by phone at (320) 630-1428. Both my staff and I stand ready and eager to work with your team.

Miigwech,



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Virgil Wind

Chief Executive

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe