



## *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

August 8, 2024

The Honorable Brian Schatz  
Chair  
U.S. Senate Indian Affairs Committee  
838 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Vice Chair  
U.S. Senate Indian Affairs Committee  
838 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Schatz and Vice Chair Murkowski:

On behalf of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, I am writing to express our unequivocal and strong support for Patrice H. Kunesh's nomination as Chair of the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC). The Band celebrates this nomination as another indication of this Administration's commitment to better delivering upon trust and treaty obligations, and enhancing our diplomatic, Nation-to-Nation relationship.

A descendant of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Ms. Kunesh has dedicated her career to the development of Tribal economies and the advancement of our inherent sovereignty. Previously, Ms. Kunesh established and led the Center for Indian Country Development at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, an economic policy research center dedicated to Indian Country issues. She has also held appointments as the Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and as the Deputy Solicitor for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior. In addition, she has served as in-house counsel to the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, and on the faculty at the University of South Dakota School of Law.

As her distinguished career demonstrates, Ms. Kunesh is a well-known advocate for the rebuilding of Tribal Nations and our economies. Her depth of experience and commitment to leadership in addressing Tribal concerns and issues makes Ms. Kunesh exceptionally prepared to serve as the next Chair of the NIGC.

We call upon the United States Senate to act swiftly on Ms. Kunesh's confirmation in accordance with its responsibility to honor its trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations. Therefore, we respectfully urge you to work with your colleagues in the United States Senate to swiftly confirm Ms. Kunesh's nomination as Chair of NIGC.

**Letter from Chief Executive Virgil Wind to U.S. Senators Brian Schatz and Lisa Murkowski**

**August 8, 2024**

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Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important matter. Should you have any questions, please contact Jamie Edwards at [jamie.edwards@millelacsband.com](mailto:jamie.edwards@millelacsband.com).

Sincerely,



Virgil Wind  
Chief Executive  
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

CC:

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar

U.S. Senator Tina Smith