



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

March 25, 2026

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

Re: Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe's CDS Request for the Isle Water Extension Project

Dear Senator Smith:

As Chief Executive of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe ("MLBO" or "the Band"), I am writing in support of the Band's Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request for the Isle Water Extension Project. The Isle Water Extension Project is an \$8,000,000 project that will connect tribal member homes to an existing regional water distribution and wastewater system within the City of Isle. The Band is requesting the remaining \$7,250,000 to complete the project for FY 2027. The Band previously received \$750,000 to complete design work on this project.

Many Band members rely on well water as their primary source of drinking water. Unfortunately, this critical water source has at times been compromised by septic system and groundwater contamination, posing significant health and safety risks to our community. The Band's Isle Water Extension Project would address this critical issue by supporting the responsible and sustainable development of water and wastewater infrastructure within our community. In addition to public health and safety benefits, the Band's Isle Water Extension Project would also support our community's environmental stewardship goals by relieving some of the pressure created by recent lakeshore development on lake ecosystems, and protecting Mille Lacs Lake, one of the largest and most popular trophy fishing lakes in Minnesota, which also contains valuable, treaty-protected fish and water assets held for the Band as the federal beneficiary.

The Band supports the Isle Water Extension Project as an important step towards increasing public health and safety among Band members and non-Band members alike while also achieving our broader environmental stewardship and community development goals. With

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previous work already completed on this project, we are prepared to be as flexible as possible to ensure that this key piece of infrastructure is developed. In case we are unable to secure the full amount of funding, we have a fallback plan if only half of our requested funding level is granted. We appreciate your consideration of the Band's Isle Water Extension Project CDS request and look forward to working with your office to ensure its inclusion in the final FY 2027 appropriations package.

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Virgil Wind

Chief Executive

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe