



LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE

Faron Jackson Sr, Chairman

Arthur LaRose, Secretary-Treasurer

Robbie Howe, District I Representative

Steve White, District II Representative

LeRoy Staples Fairbanks III, District III Representative

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe appreciates the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of HF 4265 relating to the Opioid Settlement Proceeds.

We were grateful to participate in a robust stakeholder process with support from the Office of the Attorney General. It is always beneficial to all stakeholders when Tribal Nations are consulted on matters impacting us early in the process because our engagement ensures an informed decision-making process. This bill is an excellent example of the positive outcomes that all parties experience as a result of early and meaningful consultation with Tribal Nations. Miigwech.

The language in HF 4265 reflects what stakeholders agreed to in the original HF400 and incorporates stakeholder feedback to honor that bill's intent.

The Leech Lake Band is in an "Initiative tribe", which means the Department of Human Services transferred roles and responsibilities related to child welfare from the county to our tribal child welfare agency. We share borders with four counties: Beltrami, Cass, Itasca and Hubbard counties. Therefore, we carry out the roles and responsibilities that would otherwise be the counties' task.

In recognition of this status and responsibility, HF400 provided Initiative Tribes additional financial support when opioid addiction results in out-of-home placement.

The language in HF 4265 justly recognizes and honors the work Initiative Tribes do for tribal children as was intended and executed in HF400. It is important that these financial supports for child protection services are maintained as the settlement with opioid manufacturers, distributors, and pharmacies will not address the ongoing community impacts of the opioid crisis unless the settlement funds are allocated equitably and inclusively to all communities.

Again, Miigwech for this opportunity to share our perspective on HF 4265. We look forward to further work with your committee to ensure this bill's passage.

Respectfully,

Earl Robinson
Director of Human Services
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe