

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Ron Kuehn: (608) 252-9325

Twelve groups, representing a wide range of interests including landowners, cranberry growers, other agricultural interests, business interests, utilities and others, have jointly submitted comments to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians' application to the EPA for Treatment as a State Status (TAS). Those groups today released the following statement regarding the tribe's TAS application:*

“We have reviewed the tribe's application, and while we respect the rights of the tribe as a sovereign nation to regulate tribal members, we disagree that their authority should extend to non-tribal members and resources outside the reservation boundaries or their ownership. We also object to the tribe's attempt to extend their control over subjects like boating and non-point source activities – topics that are beyond the scope of the U.S. Clean Water Act. This is why we have jointly submitted comments to the EPA regarding this matter.

“One of our main concerns is about the proposed water quality standards put forth by the tribe. Wisconsin already has many tough rules and regulations in place to ensure high water quality standards. We follow those guidelines and support clean water and air and its protection. We believe that current state and federal regulations provide adequate protection for those resources. Additionally, the EPA has acknowledged that it does have the authority to set standards on a case-by-case basis, or to adopt its own water quality standards. Therefore, it is not necessary to have tribal standards to protect water quality within the reservation.

“The tribe's current application would mean that non-members of the tribe would have to answer to the Lac du Flambeau tribal government. As non-members have no vote in tribal matters and are not represented by tribal government, this would be extremely unfair to those affected by the new rules. Wisconsin citizens, businesses and governments affected by these rules will, in effect, be denied the protection of Wisconsin laws that protect all Wisconsin residents. In short, they will lose a significant part of their citizenship rights.

“We need the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Governor Doyle's administration to stand up for Wisconsin's citizens, businesses and governments. The Lac du Flambeau's TAS application should not be accepted as it is currently written.”

*Groups include the following:

Lac du Flambeau Area Lake Property Owners
Midwest Food Processors Association, Inc.
Wisconsin Agribusiness Council
Wisconsin Builders Association
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce
Wisconsin Paper Council
Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association
Wisconsin Realtors Association
Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association
Wisconsin Utilities Association Inc.
Wisconsin Seasonal Residents Association, Inc.

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