

Contact:
Eric Pehle
612-819-5776
EPehle@webershandwick.com



Prairie Island Indian Community Responds to Lawsuit

Welch, Minn., Nov. 23, 2016 – The Prairie Island Indian Community responded today to a lawsuit filed on behalf of a group that refers to itself as the Mdewakanton Sioux Indians of Minnesota. Below is a statement from Community Council President Shelley Buck on behalf of the Community Council.

“The Prairie Island Indian Community was disappointed to learn of the lawsuit filed today by attorney Kaardal and his clients, continuing a nearly decade and a half-long attack on the federally recognized Dakota Communities of Minnesota. While the lawsuits over this time have been ever-changing and, at times, directly contradictory, what has been consistent is the pursuit of legally unfounded claims regarding long-settled law and, unfortunately, the enormous consumption of time and resources for those who are targets. Like the claims asserted against the United States for a decade and our sister Dakota Community for another three years, the current lawsuit is intended to divide Dakota people; it has no merit and we hope that it will be quickly resolved by the Court.

“Some members of this Community are named Plaintiffs, but they and their claims do not represent the views of the Community. In fact, although the Complaint is against the Secretary of the Interior, it contains claims that are directly adverse to the interests of the Prairie Island Indian Community, including the demonstrably false allegation that the Community “and the other [Minnesota Dakota] communities are not ‘separate sovereigns[.]’” Complaint at Paragraph 147.

“The Community will vigorously protect and defend the Community’s interests, its sovereignty, its members and its lands from the claims of this attorney and his clients. The Community will also provide whatever assistance may be necessary to bring this action to a swift end.”

About the Prairie Island Indian Community

The Prairie Island Indian Community, a federally recognized Indian Nation, is located in southeastern Minnesota along the banks of the Mississippi River, approximately 30 miles from the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Twin nuclear reactors and 39 large steel nuclear waste storage casks sit just 600 yards from Prairie Island tribal homes. A total of 98 casks could be stranded on Prairie Island indefinitely unless the federal government fulfills its commitment to create a permanent storage solution. The only evacuation route off the Prairie Island is frequently blocked by passing trains. The Tribe has been pushing for the removal of the nuclear waste since 1994 when Xcel Energy was first allowed to store the waste near its reservation.

On the web: www.prairieisland.org.

###